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Bible. English. Selections, 1853.

EVERY DAY

SCRIPTURE READINGS;

WITH

Brief Reviews and Practical Observations.

FOR THE

USE OF FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS.

auris
BY THE REV. JOHN L. BLAKE, D. D.

PAST RECTOR OF ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, BOSTON; AUTHOR OF A GENERAL BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY; AND EDITOR OF A DEVOTIONAL MANUAL, AND OF LECTURES AND CONVERSATIONS ON THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY FOR SUNDAY AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

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P R E F A C E .

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This work is by no means designed to supersede, or even to diminish, the habitual use of the entire Bible. That volume is the oldest book in existence, and is hence venerable for its antiquity. On this account, if for no other reason, it is of inestimable value. Were there in existence a fragment of Noah's Ark, or of the Tower of Babel, in what priceless estimation would it be cherished? Were there still living, in freshness and vigor, a tree known to have been planted by the hand of Adam, what antiquarian philosopher or devout Christian would not desire to make a pilgrimage to it? Is not the canon of Scripture to be prized for a similar consideration? The Bible also, independent of its divine authenticity, is full of the charms of literature. Where else do we find more sublime poetic inspiration, more thrilling historic incidents, or more graphic delineations of character and natural scenery? No where, with confidence we affirm! Ransack the whole realm of letters, selecting the choicest gems, yet in the sacred volume a counterpart to them may be found. Nevertheless, interspersed with such portions of the Bible are catalogues of names not easily pronounced, together with passages containing solitary facts, not involving any feature of its distinctive character, which render it, in a measure, less attractive, to the young reader especially, than it otherwise would be.

Hence, this volume is designed to furnish the Beauties of the Bible, without those portions of it to which allusion is here made. It cannot fail of being interesting as an artistic composition; and it also presents a pretty well connected outline of sacred history. To each chapter the chronology is affixed; and the narrative part of the Gospels is reduced to a regular harmony, on the plan of Newcombe. Nor has it been compiled without reference to the effect of divine truth upon the heart and the life of those who read it; for here also will be found the mass of those moral precepts, cheering promises, and pathetic admonitions, with which the Bible abounds. Ordinarily, the child, the youth, and the scholar, that becomes acquainted with its contents, will be delighted to read it; and then, if not before, to examine the entire Book from which most of the present compend is selected. It will be perceived, therefore, this volume is calculated to promote the study of the Holy Scriptures; and not only a study of them, but to inspire a veneration and love for the truths they contain.

The volume may be used as a class-book in schools, being relieved from the most popular objection many teachers urge against using the entire Bible as a class-book. And, besides such a use of it, it is particularly calculated to be used in connection with the devotional exercises of schools. For example, at the appointed hour of opening the school, and before any studies or recitations are introduced, let one of the elder or more advanced scholars read aloud, distinctly and reverently, one of the following chapters. While one is thus reading, let all be in profound silence; and, to insure the attention of the whole school to what is read, each one should be liable to be called on to answer the few questions appended for a general review. This review might be more extended, but it is designed only to make all attentive to the reading. When the reading of the text is finished, and this review is made, the instructor should read impressively the Practical Observations which succeed. Then may follow the devotional exercises. The same order may be observed at the close of the school in the afternoon. Teachers witness the best effects from thus reading the Scriptures at the commencement of morning schools. It quiets that impetuosity of feeling, and the consequent tendency to bustle and disorder, which seem always to attend the first meeting together of a large number of young per-

sons; and, in doing this, it prepares their minds for the regular business of study and recitation.

The presumption is, that no family will be without the Bible. Nor should it be kept for ornament and decency alone: it should be daily read. But it is well known that the industrial portions of a community cannot conveniently appropriate much time, morning and evening, each day to this purpose. Those not familiar with the Bible, as all Christians should be, consume as much time in making an appropriate selection to be read, as in reading it when made. Possibly, and we believe probably, if suitable selections were at hand, as in this volume, double the number of persons would daily read the Bible that now read it. Where it may be thus introduced, let the head of the family call on one of the members to read a chapter; then on the others, particularly the younger ones, to answer the questions in the Review. When this is done, he should do as the teacher in school does, read the Practical Observations; and then add the devotional exercises—prayer alone, or singing and prayer. Rarely or never would such a practice, once introduced, be cast away or neglected. It would lead to a comeliness in family order, and to a familiarity with the great principles of Christian faith and practice, rarely attained by persons obliged to labor habitually for a subsistence.

During our collegiate life, we had each winter, in the town of Wenham, Mass., a district school of three months' continuance. In this school there were about twenty scholars, young men and young women, from sixteen years of age to twenty-five. The Bible was daily read by them, in course, a chapter at a time. On one occasion, the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis fell in the course, and, without particular regard to its contents, the reading was begun by one of these young men, aged, it might be, twenty odd. On another occasion, the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book of Samuel fell in the course, and a young lady of eighteen commenced reading it. On each occasion, the elder portion of the scholars was thrown into a titter; and it would be difficult to tell whether the teacher or the scholar engaged in reading felt most keenly the dilemma. The idea of the present volume originated in the above incidents. It may be there are hundreds of passages or expressions in the Bible objectionable in being thus read, as the two were to which we have alluded. Our selection in this volume does not contain them. The late Noah Webster was so impressed with the objection, on this account, to the use of the Bible in schools with the old translation, that he was at the immense labor of making a new translation. It was published, but was too expensive, were there no objection to it, for general use. There is a conventional feeling in society, polished and refined as it now is, against certain expressions in our language, that would have been inoffensive when the authorized English translation of the Scriptures was made. Hence the translation of these words should be changed, or else the passages containing them, in volumes to be read in schools, should be omitted; for they furnish the most popular objection to the Bible as a classic, in the use of which moral purity of thought is of primary consideration.

It is known that youth and children may acquire the habit of making reflections when they read, and consequently of receiving the moral impressions which should always be made when the Scriptures are read. The Practical Observations here introduced are intended to lead to this habit. They are necessarily very brief, and of course generally relate to a single matter, or to only a few of the matters contained in the chapters with which they are connected. The most of them are selected from Commentators of acknowledged talents and piety: probably more from Ostervald, Scott, Henry, Horne, Lowth, and Macknight, than from all others. It may possibly be thought that in some of them there is not that simplicity of style desirable. The compiler is aware of this; but had he moulded them all into his own phraseology, they would have appeared monotonous, and would have been entitled to less consideration than as they now are.

J. L. BLAKE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE subjects of the Books of the Old Testament, says an eminent writer, are truly wonderful and striking, and of such a nature as to surpass all monuments of profane learning, equally in importance as in antiquity. And of all the parts which compose the sacred canon, none are more curious than *Genesis*, the first book written by Moses; because it contains a sketch of the earliest history of mankind. There stand recorded the creation of the world and its inhabitants; the fall of our first parents from their state of innocence and happiness, and their banishment from the garden of Eden; the repeated and signal promises of a future Restorer of the lost blessings of mankind; the history of the Patriarchs, honored by the revelations of Jehovah; the description of the general Deluge; the dispersion of the progenitors of the human race over all the earth; the adoption of a particular family to perpetuate the remembrance, and establish the worship of the true God, and their prosperous settlement in Egypt.

In the sacred books of the Jews is recorded an account of the descendants of Israel; a race of men selected from all others, and favored with successive revelations of the Divine will. Here are shown the instances of their infidelity, perverseness, and disobedience; their glory and triumphs; their disgraces, and their subjection to foreign powers. Here is seen the superintendence of a divine and especial Providence watching over innocence, suspending wrath, and taking the most signal vengeance upon unrepented offences. Here are developed the failings of the most virtuous persons, and the obdurate wickedness of confirmed sinners. Here are displayed the mixed characters even of the most excellent men, the eminent examples of faith and piety, of courage and patience, in the conduct of Abraham, Lot, Job, Joseph, Moses, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Daniel. And most interesting is it to observe, that the knowledge of the one true God was communicated to this people, and preserved by them alone; that they had the most sublime ideas of his nature and attributes;

that a magnificent temple was erected to his honor; a regular service was instituted; holy ceremonies were performed; an order of priests of one particular family was consecrated; a pure worship was established by his express command, and regulated by his particular laws. Thus were the Jews enlightened by a knowledge of the true object of divine worship; and thus were the purity and holiness of their religious ordinances conducted at a time when all other nations presented a wide scene of gross superstition and mental darkness; when the rest of the human race, and even the most intelligent and polished nations of Egypt and Greece, showed the most abject degradation of their nature, by prostrating themselves before idols of their own workmanship; and abused the evidence of sense, and the faculty of reason, by imputing to wood and stone the attributes of divine power.

We see likewise a succession of prophets raised up among them, to communicate the Divine will, to warn them of evils, and to announce to them blessings to come. These holy men executed their sacred commissions, unawed by the threats of kings, or the resentment of the people. They foretold remote events in times when they appeared most improbable ever to take place, and when no human foresight, and no calculation of chances, could guide them to the discovery of the particular affairs which fulfilled their predictions. Moses, in a long and most interesting detail of threats and promises, foretold the exact manner in which his people were ordained to be happy or miserable, according as they followed or disobeyed the divine laws. At a subsequent period, when Jerusalem was laid in ruins, and the Jews were groaning under the sorrows of the Babylonish captivity, Isaiah solemnly addressed Cyrus by his name, more than a hundred years before his birth, as the deliverer of Israel, and the new founder of the Holy City. When Babylon was shining in the meridian of her glory, and its monarchs ruled over all the nations of the East with the most uncontrolled sway, the same prophet predicted the total subversion of their empire, and the complete desolation of their vast metropolis. That all these and numerous other predictions were exactly verified by the events, are truths confirmed by the evidence of profane as well as sacred history. The same inspired prophets had a much more grand and important object in view than to declare the future dispensations of Providence to one nation in particular; for they announced, in terms at first dark and mysterious, but progressively more clear and circumstantial, the future birth of a Messiah, a glorious King, a divine Legislator, who was to abolish the sacrifices and religious institutions of the Jews, and proclaim and establish a general law, for the observance and happiness of all mankind. Here the evangelists contribute their aid to illustrate the declarations of the prophets, and unite the

history of the Old with that of the New Testament in the most close and indissoluble bonds of union.

The historical books of Scripture, considered from the giving of the law to Moses, to the reformation in the worship and government by Nehemiah, after the Babylonish captivity, contain a summary account of the Jewish affairs for a period of eleven centuries. They were evidently not intended to give a complete detail of national transactions, as their writers had a more sublime and important end in view. To illustrate the prophecies, by relating circumstances which existed at the time when they were uttered, and to show their accomplishment; to record various revelations of the Divine will, and to describe the state of religion among the Hebrews, and the various dispensations of Providence in public as well as in private occurrences, seem to have been their chief objects. Hence it is that the chain of history is sometimes broken into detached parts, and its detail is interrupted by a recital of private transactions. The books of Scripture occasionally assume the form, and comprise the beauties, of a very interesting kind of biography. Of this nature are the several accounts of Job, Ruth, and Esther; but they are far from being unconnected with the principal design of the sacred writers; inasmuch as they show that the same Divine Providence which presided over the nation at large, extended its particular care to individuals, and that the examples of private virtue were inseparable from the great interests of public welfare and happiness.

The Israelites, for many ages, separated from the rest of mankind by their peculiar institutions, were little acquainted with commerce, and made small advances in those arts which, with a refinement and a diversity of employments, introduced luxury and corruption of manners. They were governed by equal laws, and possessed nearly equal property. They admitted no hereditary distinction of rank, except in favor of the regal tribe of Judah, and the sacerdotal family of Levi. Their occupations from the earliest times were of the most simple kind, and consisted in pasturage and agriculture. To guide the plough and tend the flock were employments which, recommended by length of time, were exercised by kings, prophets, and generals. Moses was called from feeding his flock, to conduct the Israelites to the promised land; Elisha forsook the plough, to be invested with the mantle of prophecy; and Gideon left the threshing-floor to lead the army of his country to battle.

The country of Judea presented a scene diversified by fruitful valleys, barren rocks, and lofty mountains, and was watered by numerous streams. It produced the palm tree, the balsam, the vine, the olive, the fig, and all the fruits which abound in the East. From the labors of the field, and from cultivating the vine, the attention of the Israelites was regularly

called by religious worship, which was intimately blended with the civil constitution of the state. The splendor of their public services, the pomp and magnificence of their rites and ceremonies, the stated recurrence of their various festivals and sacrifices, the sabbath, the passover, the celebration of the sabbatical year, and the jubilee, and more than all, the constant experience of Divine interposition, filled their minds with the most awful and grand ideas, and gave them the deepest impressions of the majesty, power, goodness, and justice of God.

These were the circumstances which, combining to form their national manners, had the greatest influence upon their writings. The historical style is marked by the purest simplicity of ideas, occasionally raised to a tone of elevation. In the works of Moses there is a majesty of thought, which is most strikingly expressed in plain and energetic language. In the prophetic writings, the greatest splendor and sublimity of composition are conspicuous. They are enriched by those glowing images, and raised by that grandeur of diction, which charm the classical reader in the most admired productions of Greece and Rome. The royal Psalmist is eloquent, dignified, and pathetic. All the beauties of composition unite in Isaiah, such is the majesty of his ideas, the propriety, beauty, and fertility of his imagery, and the elegance of his language, employed upon the noblest subjects which could possibly engage our attention. Jeremiah excels in those expressions of tenderness which excite with the most pleasing enthusiasm the feelings of compassion.

By such peculiar beauties of composition are recommended the most interesting details of events and the most faithful delineations of characters. The great Creator calls all things into existence with his omnipotent word. The first parents of mankind, innocent and happy, are blessed with his immediate converse, and enjoy the blooming groves of Paradise. Joseph, the pious, the chaste, and the wise, after having undergone great afflictions, and rising by his own extraordinary merit to an office of the highest honor in the court of Pharaoh, discovers himself in a manner the most pathetic to his repentant brethren, and is restored to his aged and affectionate father, whom he invites into Egypt to share his prosperity. The children of Israel, guided by the Divine Power, which veils its glory in a cloud, pass safely through the Red Sea, in which the hosts of the impious Pharaoh are overwhelmed. Upon the lofty summit of Mount Sinai, Moses receives the two tables of the Commandments, amid the thunder, lightning, clouds, and darkness, which obscure the great Jehovah from his eyes. The royal Psalmist sings the wonders of creation, the powers of his God, and his own defeats and triumphs. The peaceful and prosperous Solomon, whose renown was extended over all the East, rears the structure of the magnificent Temple; and amid the multitudes of his

adoring subjects consecrates it to the service of the one true God, in a prayer which equally attests his wisdom and piety. In the visions of futurity, Isaiah beholds the deliverance of the chosen people; the complete destruction of the great empire of Babylon, by which they were enslaved; and the promised Messiah, the Saviour of mankind, sometimes depressed by want and sorrow, and sometimes arrayed in the emblems of divine majesty and power. He predicts the final recall of the Jews to their native land, and the wide diffusion of the Christian faith. Jeremiah sinks a weeping mourner over the ruins of his native city, deploras its calamities, and consoles his countrymen by expressly declaring that they should never cease to be a nation to the end of the world. Daniel explains to Belshazzar the mystic characters inscribed upon the walls of his palace, and views, in his wide prospect of future times, the fates of the four great empires of the world. Cyrus, long before announced by Isaiah as the great subverter of the Babylonish empire, and the restorer of the glory of Jerusalem, publishes his decree for the restoration of the captive Jews; and the Holy City and Temple rise from their ruins with new grandeur and magnificence. The Jews are settled and reformed by the pious care of Nehemiah, and the canon of the Scriptures is closed by Malachi. This last of the prophets enjoins the strict observance of the law of Moses, till the great Precursor should appear, in the spirit of Elias, to announce the approach of the Messiah, who was to establish a new and everlasting covenant.

In these volumes of sacred history there is an *impartiality* of narrative which is an undoubted characteristic of truth. If we read the Lives of Plutarch, or the History of Livy, we soon discover that these writers composed their works under the influence of many prejudices in favor of their respective countries. A veil is thrown over the defects of their heroes, but their virtues are placed in a strong light, and painted in vivid colors. In the Scriptures, on the contrary, both of the Old and New Testament, the strictest impartiality prevails. The vices of David, Solomon, and their successors, are neither concealed nor palliated. There is no ostentation of vanity, no parade of panegyric: virtue charms with her native beauty, and vice acquires no disguise to conceal her deformity. The characters of persons are sketched, and the effects of the passions are represented without reserve or concealment; and the moral to be drawn from each description is so obvious as to account for the frequent omission of remarks and applications. The abject condition of the Jews, when prohibited the use of weapons of war by the victorious Philistines; their relapses into idolatry, their perverseness of disposition, and their various defeats and captivities, with every circumstance of private and public disgrace, are recorded without palliation or reserve.

To peruse the Holy Scriptures is one of the first employments of childhood. And it will be found, as life is verging towards its close, when every other book begins to be insipid and uninteresting, that the HOLY BIBLE, which includes the most ancient records of time, the clearest evidences of a divine revelation, and the joyful promises of eternal happiness, will attract us more and more as old age advances, and will afford us that divine solace and inexpressible satisfaction which no other writings can give.

DAILY
SCRIPTURE READINGS.

CHAPTER I.

The History of the Creation. From the first and second Chapters of Genesis. B. C. 4004.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light : and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good : and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament : and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear : and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth ; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas : and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth : and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the

tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind : and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night ; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years ; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth : and it was so. And God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness : and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind : and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the sea ; and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind : and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind : and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it ; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed ; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the

air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What part of the creation was effected the first day?—What part on the second day?—What part on the third day?—What part on the fourth?—What part on the fifth?—What part on the sixth?—What took place on the seventh day?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are here taught the first truth in religion, viz., that there is a God who created the world and all things that are therein; that it is he who has given to all creatures the nature and qualities that belong to them; and that by his will the world subsists in that admirable order which we observe it. But what we chiefly learn from the history of the creation is, that God made man after his own image; that he gave him dominion over all other creatures, and endued him with a spiritual and immortal soul, capable of knowing and loving his Creator; and therefore it is our duty to acknowledge and adore the power, majesty, and wisdom of God, which are so manifest in all his works; to celebrate his goodness towards us, and continually to render him the thanks, love, and obedience, which are so justly due to him.

CHAP. II.

Man Placed in Paradise. From the second Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 4004.

THESE are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God

formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden ; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food ; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone ; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air ; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them : and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field : but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept : and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife : and they shall be one flesh.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is said of the creation of man ?—Under what prohibitions was Adam placed in Paradise ?—Of what had he permission to eat ?—How was woman formed ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

God placed Adam in Paradise that he might be happy ; but, to make trial of his obedience, at the same time gave him a law attended with severe threatenings : forbidding him, upon pain of death, to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In this proceeding of the Almighty, we see the great goodness of God towards man in his state of innocence ; but we see likewise, that man could not be independent, that he was obliged to submit to the laws of his Creator, and that by his obedience alone he was entitled to the effects of Divine love.

CHAP. III.

Adam's Transgression. From the third Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 4004.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid; and I hid myself. And he said, Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children: and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat

bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever : Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man : and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

BRIEF REVIEW.

By what means were our first parents induced to disobey God and eat of the forbidden fruit?—Why did God drive them out of the garden after their transgression?—How were they prevented from returning into it?—Why was Adam's wife called Eve?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This account of Adam's sin was committed to writing that it might appear that God is not the author of sin, but that man fell into it wilfully, and through his own fault. We learn likewise, from the fall of our first parents, how dangerous it is to disbelieve what God has declared, to give ear to temptations, and to follow the desires of the flesh ; and with how much care we ought to watch over ourselves, obedient in all things to the laws of the Lord, even in those things that appear to be of the least importance. We may also learn from what happened to Adam and Eve after their sin, and the punishment that God inflicted on them, in making them subject to the miseries of this life, and to death itself, and driving them out of the garden of Eden, that the Divine threatenings are never in vain, and that God cannot suffer man's disobedience to go unpunished. But the goodness of God, at the same time, appeared in the promise, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." The meaning of this was, that God would deliver men from sin and death, which were entered into the world by the seducement of the devil. Let us bless God for fulfilling this promise, by sending Jesus Christ into the world to destroy the works of the devil, and to procure his people an admission into the heavenly paradise, where he has prepared for them happiness that shall never end.

CHAP. IV.

History of Cain and Abel. From the fourth Chapter of Genesis. A. M. 2.—B. C. 4003.

ADAM and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Abel was a

keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. A. M. 129. B. C. 3875. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength: A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What were the occupations of Cain and Abel?—What caused Cain to be offended with Abel?—What was the punishment threatened upon Cain for killing his brother?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Let every Christian take care that he fall not after the similitude of this transgression. It is a determined case, that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer;" it is an unquestionable truth, that he who *envieth* his brother will soon *hate* him; and it is no less certain, that "the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy." How earnestly and fervently then ought we to pray that "from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness," God would "deliver us!"

Though God doth not, in the present age of the world, discover himself in so astonishing a manner as formerly, still he is not unconcerned in human affairs. Those crimes of men which are committed with the utmost secrecy are generally brought to light by the conduct of Providence. Sin will either discover itself or be discovered. The blood of an Abel will cry from the earth—an almighty vengeance will pursue the murderer.

CHAP. V.

History of the Deluge. From the sixth, seventh, and eighth Chapters of Genesis. A. M. 1536.—B. C. 2463.

AND God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher-wood: for behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant: and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee: they shall be male and female. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. For yet seven days, and

A. M. 1656.

B. C. 2348.

I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights : and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came to pass, after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the flood was forty days upon the earth : and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth : and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth : and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail : and the mountains were covered.

And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man : All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven ; and they were destroyed from the earth : and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark : and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged ; the fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained ; and the waters returned from off the earth continually : and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually, until the tenth month : in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened

the window of the ark which he had made : And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground : But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark ; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark ; and the dove came in to him in the evening ; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive-leaf, plucked off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove ; which returned not again unto him any more.

A. M. 1657. And it came to pass, in the sixth hundredth and
B. C. 2347. first year, in the first month, the first day of the
month, the waters were dried up from off the earth :
and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives, with him : Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord ; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour : and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake ; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth : neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who were the three sons of Noah?—Whom did Noah take into the ark with him?—How high did the waters rise?—How long after it began to rain before the floods began to abate?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The history of the flood is the most signal example God has given of his justice since the creation of the world. It is, too, a most certain fact, the remembrance of which has been preserved among all nations, and in the most ancient authors, as well as in the Holy Scriptures. St. Peter

teaches us the use we ought to make of this history, when he says, "If God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." Let us seriously reflect upon this great example; let us learn from hence that God is just, and that his threatenings are not in vain. Moreover, let us consider, that as they who were not in the ark perished, those who shall neglect to enter into the way of salvation, and to lay hold of the long-suffering of God, shall also inevitably perish. This is what our Saviour warns us of in his Gospel, when he says that it will be at the day of his coming "as in the days of Noah;" when the inhabitants of the first world lived in security, and thought nothing of the flood till it came upon them, and destroyed them all. Thus will sinners be surprised at the coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world, and render to all men according to their works.

CHAP. VI.

Murder forbidden, and God's Covenant with Noah. From the ninth Chapter of Genesis
A. M. 1657.—B. C. 2347.

AND God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea: into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Who-so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you. Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And

it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What permission was given man after the flood relating to his food?—
 What injunction was then given concerning the shedding of blood?—
 What did God appoint as a sign of his covenant that he would no more destroy the world by a flood of waters?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Before the flood, man was permitted to use for food the fruits of the earth only; but God now grants him permission to eat of all living creatures, as he formerly had done of all the fruits of the garden. The covenant which God made with Noah at this time, no more to destroy the world by a flood of waters, still remains good. The Almighty did not, however, "set his bow in the clouds" for his own sake, to engage *his* attention, and revive *his* memory whenever "he looked on it," (though that be the expression which the Holy Spirit, speaking after the manner of men, has thought fit to make use of;) but for *our* sakes was it placed there, as an illustrious symbol of the Divine mercy and goodness, and to confirm our belief and confidence in God. And therefore, whenever we "look upon the rainbow," we should do well to "praise him who made it; very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof. It compasseth the heavens about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it."

CHAP. VII.

Confusion of Tongues at Babel. From the eleventh Chapter of Genesis. A. M. 1747.—
 B. C. 2247.

AND the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a

tower whose top may reach unto heaven ; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language ; and this they begin to do : and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth : and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth : and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What reason induced the descendants of Noah to build the tower of Babel?—What took place in their language when building it?—Why was the place called Babel?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There have been various conjectures concerning the *purpose* for which this tower was built. Some suppose it was intended to prevent the effects of another flood, by affording an asylum to the builders and their families in case of another general deluge. Others think that it was designed to be a grand city, the seat of government, in order to prevent a general *dispersion*. This God would not permit, as he had purposed that men should be dispersed over the earth ; and therefore caused the means which they were using to prevent it, to become the grand instrument of its accomplishment. Humanly speaking, the earth would not have been so speedily peopled had it not been for this very circumstance, which the counsel of man had devised to prevent it.

CHAP. VIII.

God's Call of Abram, and his Journey into Egypt. From the twelfth Chapter of Genesis.
A. M. 2083.—B. C. 1921.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee : and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing : and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran: and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

And there was a famine in the land: and Abram
 A. M. 2084. went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine
 B. C. 1920. was grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when
 he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his
 wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:
 therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee,
 that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but
 they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister:
 that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live
 because of thee.

And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now, therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What direction did Abram receive from the Lord, mentioned in this chapter?—At what age did he depart from Haran?—What induced him to go to Egypt?—What measure did he adopt to save his own life when among the Egyptians?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

God called Abram and made a covenant with him, in order to preserve the true religion among his posterity, from which the Messiah was one day to descend. We are informed that Abram obeyed the calling of God, believing in his promises, though they were not immediately accomplished;

that he was exposed to several troubles; that he dwelt in the land of Canaan as a stranger, and was forced by famine to go into Egypt, where he had like to have lost his wife. Let us learn then, after this patriarch, to obey with cheerfulness the commands of God, how difficult soever they may appear to us; to live like strangers in this world, and not to seek our true country here, but in heaven; waiting, like our father Abram, for that city which is to come, whose builder and maker is God.

CHAP. IX.

Separation of Abram from Lot. From the thirteenth Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 1918.

AND Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich, in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And Lot also had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, even as the garden of the Lord. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is said of the temporal circumstances of Abram and Lot?—What caused them to separate?—In what place was it agreed that Abram was to dwell?—In what one was Lot?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

The great riches which God gave to Abram should be considered as an effectual blessing which he had promised him; by which we may learn, that the promises of God are always fulfilled, and that he often bestows upon them that fear him even the blessings of the present life. The disputes which happened between the servants of Lot and the servants of Abram, and the moderation of the latter, who gave his nephew Lot the choice of fixing where he pleased, is a lesson to us to avoid those quarrels that are usually occasioned by worldly goods, to make the first advances towards an accommodation, and to renounce even our own advantage for the sake of peace. We may also take notice from this chapter of the folly and danger of consulting our senses only in the choice of a way of life. Lot made choice of the fruitful plain of Jordan; not considering the danger of being in the neighborhood of a most wicked people. The consequence of this unadvised choice was, he lost all he had; he lost his wife; and he had like to have lost his life, had not Abram prevailed with God for his deliverance. This choice was made twenty years before Sodom was destroyed.

 CHAP. X.

God promiseth Abram a Son, and afterwards renews his Covenant. From the fifteenth and seventeenth Chapters of Genesis. B. C. 1913.

AND the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? and Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own self shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he

said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

B. C. 1898. And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What promise did God make to Abram in this chapter?—What alteration was made in his name at this time?—What country was promised to his seed?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who trust in God and serve him should fear no enemies, for they have an omnipresent and omnipotent Protector. Nor need they hesitate to renounce the most valuable temporal advantages for his sake; for he will abundantly recompense them—yea, he himself will be their shield and portion, their exceeding great and everlasting reward. With whatever long delays and great discouragements the faith of such persons may be tried, he will strengthen it; and they who walk before him, trust in him, and wait for him, shall never be ashamed. It is our part to look to our own temper and conduct; and to leave all in his hands, who is all-sufficient and almighty; and who, for the purposes of his own glory, often delays to interpose till expectation from every other quarter fails.

CHAP. XI.

Abraham's Hospitality and Importunity for Sodom. From the eighteenth Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 1898.

AND the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day: And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that you shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.

And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee:

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What striking instance of Abraham's hospitality is mentioned in this chapter?—For what purpose were these persons sent to Abraham?—What were the requests made by Abraham to the Lord, in behalf of Sodom?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The hospitality and humanity of Abraham are worthy not only of our most serious regard, but also of our *imitation*. He sat in the door of his tent, in the heat of the day, not only to enjoy the current of refreshing air, but that if he saw any weary and exhausted travellers, he might invite them to rest and refresh themselves.

The conduct of Abraham on this occasion furnishes also a powerful instance of the efficacy of well-directed prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." This was indeed true in the case now under consideration; and such is the amazing extent of the Divine mercy, that had there been only ten righteous persons in the city, the rest would have been spared for their sakes.

CHAP. XII.

The Destruction of Sodom. From the nineteenth Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 1898.

AND there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them;

and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground ; and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet ; and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay ; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly ; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house : and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter : and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night ? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him ; and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge : now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great ; so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides ? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place : for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord ; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get ye out of this place ; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here ; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters ; the Lord being merciful unto him : and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain ; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord : Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magni-

fied thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die. Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither: therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How came there to be two angels in Lot's house?—What took place with the Sodomites that night?—What communication did the angels make to Lot concerning Sodom?—Who besides Lot were saved?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We find that the example and precepts of Abraham had not been lost on his nephew Lot. He also, like his uncle, watches for opportunities to call in the weary traveller. *This*, Abraham had taught his household; and we see the effect of this blessed teaching. Lot was both *hospitable and pious*, though living in the midst of a crooked and perverse race.

What Sodom was, the world shall be; and at the last day, when we shall arise and look towards the place where its pleasures and delights, its beauties and glories, once existed, as "Abraham arose in the morning, and looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the cities of the plain," we shall behold a sight like that which presented itself to the patriarch, "the smoke of the country going up as the smoke of a furnace."

But the same all-gracious and merciful God, who, "when he destroyed the cities of the plain," remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow; when he shall destroy this place wherein we dwell, will remember the true Abraham, the father of us all, and our dear Redeemer and Intercessor, and, for his sake, if we now repent and believe in him, will save us in that day from the ruins of a burning world, and from those fires which are never to be quenched.

CHAP. XIII.

Abraham offereth his son Isaac to the Lord. From the twenty-first and twenty-second Chapters of Genesis. B. C. 1897.

AND Abraham was an hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him. And it came to pass, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham : and he said, B. C. 1872. Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah ; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide you here, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son ; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife : and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father : and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood : but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering ? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering : so they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of : and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order ; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns ; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord ; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in mul-

tipling I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies : and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up, and went together unto Beersheba : and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?—What direction did Abraham receive from God concerning Isaac?—What did he do when they came to the place where the sacrifice was to be offered?—Why was not Isaac offered?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Here we see the truth of what the apostles Paul and James teach us, that Abraham showed his faith by his works, when God tried him, and commanded him to offer up his only son ; which is an evident proof, that wherever true faith is, it leads men to do whatever God commands ; and consequently, that we cannot please God, nor be justified, without obedience, and without good works.

This admirable example of the obedience of Abraham, who obeyed the Divine command in so difficult a point, teaches us to love, above all things, to be ready to offer up to him all that is most dear to us, and to submit ourselves to his will, even in the most hard and severe trials, and always trust in his providence. The repeated assurances God gave Abraham of his favour deserve particularly to be attended to, who said unto him, by his angel, after the patriarch had given proof of his obedience, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me: because thou hast done this, I will surely bless thee." Though we owe our being and all that we have to God, and what we do deserves no reward, yet he graciously accepts our endeavours to please him, and to express our love to him, and rewards them abundantly.

CHAP. XIV.

The Cave of Machpelah. From the twenty-third and twenty-fifth Chapters of Genesis.
B. C. 1860.

AND Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old ; and Sarah died : and Abraham came to mourn and to weep for her. And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you : give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth

answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord : Thou art a mighty prince among us : in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead : none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field : for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a burying-place among you. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gates of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me : The field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee ; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee : bury thy dead.

And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron, in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee hear me : I will give thee money for the field ; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me : The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver ; what is that betwixt me and thee ? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron ; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession, in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah : the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.

And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.
 A. M. 2175. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's
 B. C. 1829. life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years ; and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth : there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How old was Sarah when she died?—Where was the cave of Machpelah?—What did he pay for it?—How old was Abraham when he died?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The longest life must shortly close; and the survivors among relations only live to experience the greater number of painful separations. The more valued any earthly enjoyment is, the greater must be our reluctance to part with it, and our anxiety about it, and the sharper the anguish when that event actually takes place. And when those who have lived together in conjugal harmony and affection for many years are parted by death, the separation bears some resemblance to the dissolution of soul and body. It has been remarked, that in different nations it was deemed ignominious to be buried in another's ground; probably this prevailed in early times in the East; and it may be in reference to a sentiment of this kind that Abraham refused to accept the offer of the children of Heth to bury in any of their sepulchres, and earnestly requests them to sell him one, that he might bury his wife in a place that he could claim as his own.

CHAP. XV.

Jacob goeth to Padan-aram. From the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth Chapters of Genesis. A. M. 2225.—B. C. 1779.



ISAAC DECEIVED BY JACOB AND REBEKAH.

AND Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of

Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it; and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.

And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and, behold, a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the

sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place. And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well. And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father. And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? And Laban had two daughters: and the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender-eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well-favoured. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

BRIEF REVIEW.

To whom was Jacob directed to go for a wife?—What took place at night when he was on the way?—What did Jacob call the place where he had his vision?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Christian cannot but notice, with increased confidence in the faithfulness of God, that the divine promise of multiplying the posterity of Jacob has been fulfilled to a most astonishing extent; for his descendants already, at a moderate computation, have exceeded two hundred millions of people. They have existed more than three thousand and five hundred years; and will probably continue to exist, as a distinct class of people, to the end of the world. And the time may come, when the number of Jacob's posterity shall exceed the whole number of the inhabitants of the earth at any one period since the creation.

CHAP. XVI.

Affectionate Meeting of Jacob and Esau. From the thirty-second and thirty-third Chapters of Genesis. A. M. 2265.—B. C. 1739.

AND Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host. And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: and I have oxen, and flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands: and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; and he delivered it into the hand of his servants; and said unto them, Say ye, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face: peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him. And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. And he lifted

up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

BRIEF REVIEW.

To what place did Jacob send messengers to meet his brother Esau?—What account did they bring back?—How did Jacob attempt to appease his brother Esau?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jacob's recollection of his *unkindness and injustice* to his brother, when he hears that he is coming to meet him, fills his soul with fear, and obliges him to betake himself to God by prayer and supplication. How important is the office of *conscience*. And how necessary are times of *difficulty and trial*, when its voice is loudest, and the heart is best prepared to receive its reproofs. In how many cases has conscience *slumbered*, till it pleased God to send some *trial* by which it has been powerfully awakened, and the salvation of the sinner was the result! *Before I was afflicted I went astray.*

When a man's ways please God, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. When Jacob had got reconciled to God, God reconciled his brother to him. The hearts of all men are in the hands of God, and he turns them howsoever he will.

 CHAP. XVII.

Jacob called Israel. From the thirty-fifth Chapter of Genesis. A. M. 2266.—B. C. 1738.

AND God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram; and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: a nation, and a company of nations, shall be of thee; and kings shall come out of thy loins: And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el.

BRIEF REVIEW.

At what place did God direct Jacob to build an altar?—What change took place in Jacob's name at this time?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

From Jacob's frequent changing his dwelling, it appears that the patriarchs had no settled state in the land of Canaan; and from the afflictions with which God visited him, particularly by the death of Rachel, it appears that no happiness was secured to them on earth, and that their country was in heaven. We also learn, in this chapter, that wherever Jacob went, God appeared to him, and repeated his promises and the assurance of his protection: from whence we are to acknowledge, that God is every where with those that fear him, and never withdraws his love from them. We are moreover to observe, the care that Jacob took to banish idolatry out of his family, burying the idols which his people carried with them, and to fulfil the vow which he had made to worship God at Bethel, where he had appeared to him as he went into Mesopotamia, is a noble example of piety and gratitude, which we ought to imitate.

CHAP. XVIII.

Joseph hated of his Brethren. From the thirty-seventh Chapter of Genesis. A. M. 2276.—
B. C. 1728.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren; and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

And he dreamed yet another dream and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him: And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, and our flesh: and his brethren were content. And they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the

pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt.



JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit: and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood: And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted: and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Why is Jacob said to have loved Joseph more than his other children?—What effect had this on the minds of Joseph's brethren towards him?—What dreams had Joseph, which caused them to hate him the more?—What did they do with him?—What did they tell their father concerning him?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We see in the malice of Joseph's brethren against him, that virtue and

innocence are often exposed to envy and jealousy, and that these passions lead men to commit very great crimes. These passions, when full grown, break through every tie of nature, every obligation of duty, and every restraint of conscience and compassion. We may also see in this part of the history of Joseph, that when bad men are bent upon wickedness, they will never want some stratagem to effect it, and some pretext to conceal it: but, however unanimous they may be in hiding their sins, they will at last be brought to light, to their shame and confusion.

CHAP. XIX.

Joseph carried into Egypt and imprisoned. From the thirty-ninth Chapter of Genesis.
B. C. 1729.—A. M. 2275.

AND Joseph was brought down to Egypt: and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man: and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass, from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake: and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat: and Joseph was a goodly person, and well-favoured.

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and would have seduced him. But he refused; and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master hath committed all that he hath to my hand; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her; and she caught him by his garment, and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her until his lord came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his

master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who bought Joseph of the Ishmaelites?—How was he treated?—Who caused him to be imprisoned?—How was he treated by the prison-keeper?—What mark of favour and confidence was shown him when in prison?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Joseph was no sooner arrived in Egypt than, by his wisdom and fidelity, he gained the favour and confidence of his master, and experienced that blessing from God which every where attends the virtuous. But he was there likewise exposed to a dangerous temptation; which, however, he resisted, through the fear he had of sinning against God. This example of Joseph's piety and chastity ought to have great influence upon Christians to keep themselves from sin. It is seen, by what happened to Joseph when accused by his master's wife and thrown into prison, that those who have cast off modesty are easily hurried to revenge, lying, and all manner of wickedness; and that innocence is sometimes slandered and oppressed. But the kind treatment Joseph met with in prison shows that God is always with the righteous; and that he never forsakes them, even when they are persecuted unjustly.

CHAP. XX.

Pharaoh's Butler and Baker imprisoned. From the fortieth Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 1720.—A. M. 2284.

AND it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season in ward.

B. C. 1718. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream; the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers, that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said unto him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place; and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered, and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants; and he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker; as Joseph had interpreted to them.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who were cast into prison with Joseph?—What brought him into

notice with Pharaoh's officers?—What request did he make of the chief butler, on interpreting his dream?—What became of Pharaoh's chief butler and baker?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This chapter furnishes us with the following reflections: First, That the dreams of Pharaoh's two officers were sent by God to serve afterwards to make Joseph known to Pharaoh, and to procure his release from prison; wherein we should admire the providence of the Almighty, who so ordered it, that he might bring about the deliverance and exaltation of his servant. Secondly, The behaviour of the butler, who forgot Joseph, represents the usual conduct of those in prosperity: they forget those in misery, even though they owe them the greatest obligations. However, it must be observed, Thirdly, that God would not deliver Joseph out of prison by means of this officer, but was pleased to try him yet two years longer, to deliver him afterwards in a more wonderful manner, and raise him to a greater degree of power than he would have obtained if he had been set at liberty before. This shows that "God's ways are not as our ways;" that he does not always make use of those methods for the deliverance of his children which men judge most convenient; and if he be slow in coming to their assistance, it is because he will deliver them after a more signal manner.

CHAP. XXI.

Joseph released from Prison, and advanced to great Honour in Egypt. From the forty-first Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 1715.

AND it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed; and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favoured kine, and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

And he slept and dreamed the second time; and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning, that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dreams; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was: me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

And Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favoured kine, that came up after them, are seven years; and the seven empty ears, blasted with the east wind, shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do, he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following: for it shall be very grievous.

And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck: and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had: and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which was round about every city laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said. And the famine was over all the face of the earth. And Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians. And the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What were the two dreams of Pharaoh?—Why was he induced to employ Joseph to interpret them?—What was the interpretation of the dreams?—What direction did Joseph give Pharaoh relating to the approaching famine?—To what honour did the king appoint Joseph?—What was Joseph's age at this time?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have now followed Joseph to the height of his advancement. We have seen him in all the several parts of life virtuous and religious, pa-

tient and courageous under the greatest misfortunes, and modest and temperate in the greatest successes. His virtue, indeed, had been for some time ill requited. He was imprisoned by his master for being just and faithful to him in a point in which his peace and honour were, in the greatest degree, concerned. Yet, though he suffered, his own conscience gave him some comfort, and the Spirit of God greater. He resigned himself up entirely to the Divine will; as knowing that whatever happens, it will "work together for good to them that love God." The Divine workings are indeed many times to us unsearchable; but they are always managed by infinite goodness and wisdom. Joseph trusted in God; who not only delivered him from the prison where he had been confined, but at once advanced him to be first minister to the king of Egypt. Such was the reward of his piety. And thus was it done to that person whom the Lord delighteth to honour.

CHAP. XXII.

Joseph's Brethren go to Egypt for Bread. From the forty-second Chapter of Genesis.
B. C. 1707.

Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren: for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan, to buy food.

And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men; thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies : Hereby ye shall be proved : By the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you : or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days. And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live ; for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison : go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses : but bring your youngest brother unto me ; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child ; and ye would not hear ? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them ; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept : and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way : and thus did he unto them. And they departed thence ; and came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them.

And it came to pass, as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack : and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children : Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away : all these things are against me. And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee : deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you ; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone : if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

BRIEF REVIEW.

For what purpose did Jacob send his sons into Egypt?—How did

Joseph receive his brethren when they came into Egypt?—Did he know them?—Of what did he accuse them?—How did he propose to prove their sincerity?—How was Jacob affected with the report they brought back?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What Joseph's brethren said one to another when they were put in prison is very remarkable. Till then, they had not so lively a sense of the heinousness of the sin they had committed against him twenty years before; but the distress they were in made them remember the anguish in which they had seen him, and their inhuman treatment of him. The conscience of a sinner may be insensible for a time; but sooner or later it will awake, especially in time of adversity, and torment him with horror and remorse.

CHAP. XXIII.

Joseph's Brethren go to Egypt the second time. From the forty-third Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 1707.

AND the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him: of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.

And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this: take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds: And take double money in your hand: and the money that was brought again in the mouth of

your sacks, carry it again in your hand ; peradventure it was an oversight : Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man : and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin ; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready ; for these men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade ; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. And the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house ; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in, that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen. And he said, Peace be to you ! fear not : your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks : I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake ? is he yet alive ? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health ; he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me ? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste ; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother : and he sought where to weep ; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Which of Jacob's sons persuaded him to send Benjamin to Egypt, as required by Joseph?—What did Judah promise his father if he would let Benjamin go?—What direction did Jacob give his sons?—How did Joseph receive them when they reached Egypt the second time?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jacob's being forced to send his sons again into Egypt must be considered as a new trial brought on by God ; in which appeared his tenderness for his children, and his faith and perseverance ; above all, he gave a noble example of piety and resignation, recommending them to the Divine protection, and submitting to be deprived of them if God should think fit. Thus are we to submit to the dispensations of Providence, and resign ourselves to all events. What Joseph said to his brethren when

they came again into Egypt, and his manner of treating them, showed his extreme tenderness for his father and brother Benjamin; and that he always loved his brethren, notwithstanding the injuries they had done him. This character of kindness and meekness is the sure mark of good men: they not only have the most tender affection for their relations, but are without resentment for the injuries they have received, and are always ready to do good to those that have offended them.

CHAP. XXIV.

Jacob's eloquent Appeal to Joseph. From the forty-fourth Chapter of Genesis. B. C. 1707.

AND he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth: and put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn-money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away. And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing.

And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and returned to the city: and came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there; and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants; behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom

the cup is found. And he said, God forbid that I should do so : but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant ; and as for you, get ye up in peace unto your father.

Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant : for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother ? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one : and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father : for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down : if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down ; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons : and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces ; and I saw him not since : and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us ; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life ; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die : and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord ; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me ? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What measure did Joseph again take to humble his brethren before he made himself known to them?—What did they propose when accused of taking Joseph's cup?—Which one of them addressed Joseph when brought before him?—What did Judah do to effect the release of Benjamin?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No paraphrase can heighten the effect of Judah's address to Joseph. To *add*, would be to diminish its excellence; to attempt to *explain*, would be to obscure its beauties; to clothe the ideas in other language than that of Judah, and his translators in our Bible, would ruin its energy, and destroy its influence. It is perhaps one of the most tender and affecting pieces of natural oratory ever spoken or perused; and we need not wonder to find that when Joseph heard it, he could not refrain himself, but wept aloud. His soul must have been insensible beyond what is common to human nature, had he not immediately yielded to a speech so delicately tender, and so powerfully impressive.

CHAP. XXV.

Joseph maketh himself known to his Brethren. From the forty-fifth Chapter of Genesis.
B. C. 1707.

THEN Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you: and they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. And he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there will I nourish thee, (for yet there are five years of famine,) lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that, his brethren talked with him.

To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent waggons laden with the good things of Egypt, with corn and bread and meat. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What reason did Joseph give his brethren for not grieving at their former conduct towards him?—What did he promise to do for them?—What did he give them previous to their departure for Canaan?—What did Jacob say on hearing that Joseph was alive?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Joseph saw that his brethren were confounded at his presence; that they were struck with his present power; and that they keenly remembered, and deeply deplored, their guilt. It was absolutely necessary to comfort them, lest their hearts should have been overwhelmed with over-much sorrow. How delicate and finely wrought is the apology he makes for them! The whole heart of the pious and affectionate brother is at once seen in it: *art* is confounded and swallowed up by *nature*. "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves: it was not *you* that sent me hither, but *God*." What he says also concerning his *father*, shows the warmest feelings of a benevolent, pious, and filial heart. Indeed, the whole chapter is a masterpiece of composition; and it is the more impressive, because it is evidently a *simple relation of facts just as they occurred*. No attempt appears to have been made to heighten the effect by rhetorical colouring, or philosophical reflections.

CHAP. XXVI.

Jacob and his Family remove to Egypt. From the forty-sixth Chapter of Genesis.
B. C. 1706.

AND Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to

Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the waggon which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him. His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed, brought he with him into Egypt.

All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six. And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten. And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What took place at Beer-sheba?—What did God there promise him?—How many persons went with Jacob into Egypt?—Where did Joseph meet his father?—What did Jacob then say?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The promise which God made to Abraham, to give his posterity the land of Canaan, could not be performed till Abraham's family was grown strong enough to take and keep possession of it. In the mean time, therefore, they were necessitated to reside among idolaters, and to reside unmixed; but whoever examines their history will see that the Israelites ever had a violent propensity to join themselves to Gentile nations, and to practise their manners. God, therefore, in his infinite wisdom, brought them into Egypt, and kept them there during this period, the only place where they could remain so long a time safe and unconfounded with the natives; the ancient Egyptians being, by numerous institutions, forbidden all fellowship with strangers, and bearing, besides, a particular aversion to the profession of the Israelites, who were shepherds. Thus, from the

Israelites going into Egypt, arises a new occasion to adore the footsteps of Eternal Wisdom in his dispensations to his chosen people.

CHAP. XXVII.

Joseph presenteth his Father and Brethren to Pharaoh, and he settleth them in the land of Goshen. From the forty-seventh and forty-eighth Chapters of Genesis. B. C. 1706.

THEN Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father, and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.



JOSEPH PRESENTING HIS BRETHREN.

They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come: for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: The land of Egypt is before thee: in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen

let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, I pray thee, deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: But I will lie with my fathers; and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What inquiry did Pharaoh make of Joseph's brethren when presented to him?—What did Pharaoh say to Joseph?—What inquiry did he make of Jacob?—What was Jacob's reply?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Pharaoh's kind reception of Jacob and his family, which is a mark of the blessing that attended Jacob, shows how God disposes and turns the hearts of kings in favour of those he loves.

If we look into the story of those friends and favourites of Heaven, the ancestors of the Israelitish nation, we find them sojourning in a land

that was not theirs; dwelling only in tents, soon pitched, and as soon removed again; having no ground of their own to set their foot on, save only a possession of a burying-place, and that purchased of the inhabitants; where they might rest from their travels, till they shall pass, at the resurrection of the just, to their durable inheritance in the kingdom of God. Such was Jacob's notion of human life, expressed in his answer to the Egyptian monarch who had inquired his age.

Besides the desire natural to men of being buried with their forefathers, Jacob had this peculiar reason for his request, namely, his belief that the country where their bodies lay was his in reversion, and that God, in his due time, would put his children into possession of it; for which time they would long more earnestly because the bodies of their ancestors were there buried.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Jacob calleth his Sons, and blesseth them. From the forty-ninth Chapter of Genesis.
A. M. 2315.—B. C. 1689.

AND Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Zebulon shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships: and his border shall be unto Zidon.

Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

Gad, a troop shall overcome him ; but he shall overcome at the last.

Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

Naphtali is a hind let loose : he giveth goodly words.

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough, by a well ; whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him : but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob ; from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel : even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee ; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under : they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

Benjamin shall raven as a wolf ; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel : and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them ; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people : bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of E'phron the Hittite ; in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife ; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife ; and there I buried Leah. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

BRIEF REVIEW.

For what purpose did Jacob call his sons together?—What prediction did he make concerning Judah?—What did he charge them to do?—With whom was he to be buried?—What took place when he had made an end of speaking to them?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We can scarcely conceive a scene more noble or dignified, than that exhibited at the death-bed of Jacob. This great man was now *one hundred and forty-seven* years of age—though his body, by the waste of time, was greatly enfeebled, yet with a mind in perfect vigour, and a hope full of immortality, he calls his numerous family together, all of them in their utmost state of prosperity, and gives them his last counsels, and his dying blessing. His declarations show that the secret of the Lord was with

him; and that his candle shone bright upon his tabernacle. Having finished his work, with perfect possession of all his faculties, and being determined that while he was able to *help himself*, none should be called in to assist; which was one of the grand characteristics of his life, he stretched himself upon his bed, and rather appears to have *conquered* death, than to have *suffered* it. Who, seeing the end of this illustrious patriarch, can help exclaiming, There is none like the God of Jeshurun! Let Jacob's God be my God! Let *me* die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

CHAP. XXIX.

Joseph burieth his Fãther. His own Death. From the fiftieth Chapter of Genesis. A. M. 2315.—B. C. 1689.

AND Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought for a possession of a burying-place of E'phron the Hittite.

And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father. And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will cer-

tainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent messengers unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

A. M. 2369.

B. C. 1635.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was done to the body of Jacob before it was buried?—For how long time did the Egyptians mourn for him?—What did Joseph's brethren fear after their father's death?—What did Joseph say to them?—At what age did he die?—What oath did he require of his brethren before his death?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The attention paid to the dead, though commonly the effect of custom or superstition, should result from faith in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body. Our deceased friends still live, and we shall meet them again; though separated from the body, a re-union shall certainly take place. Therefore we commit the body, with decent respect, unto the ground, in *sure* and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life of all true believers; and whatever our hopes or fears are, God is the only infallible Judge who are, and who are not, true believers.

Moses does not tell us what became of the other sons of Jacob; but Josephus saith, they were all carried into the land of Canaan to be buried. For they had probably the same desire, and gave the same charge concerning their bodies, to keep their posterity in hope, that God would certainly bring them thither. This may seem to be imported by the words of St. Stephen also: "Jacob went down into Egypt and died, he and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought."

CHAP. XXX.

The Children of Israel oppressed, and the Birth of Moses. From the first and second Chapters of Exodus. A. M. 2369.—B. C. 1635.

AND the children of Israel multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them task-masters, to afflict them with their burdens. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

A. M. 2400.
B. C. 1604.

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

A. M. 2424.
B. C. 1580.

A. M. 2432.
B. C. 1572.

A. M. 2433.
B. C. 1571.

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child

grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses; and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was the state of the children of Israel?—What fear had the Egyptians from them?—What method did Pharaoh adopt to reduce their strength?—What was done with Moses by his mother to preserve his life?—How was he discovered?—Who was appointed to nurse him?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The multiplying of the children of Israel in Egypt, and the barbarous methods made use of by Pharaoh to destroy them, fulfil what God had foretold the patriarchs, that their posterity should be greatly increased; that it should be afflicted in Egypt; and that afterwards he would bring them out from thence. We must likewise observe the wisdom and goodness of God who blessed the children of Israel in Egypt; but as he would not have them continue there, suffered them to be thus persecuted, to the end they might be the more easily induced to leave that country. Thus God often permits his children to be afflicted and persecuted in this world, to try them, and to make them leave it without regret.

Upon reading in this chapter how Moses was, by a particular providence, preserved after his birth, nursed by his own mother, and brought up at court by the king's daughter, we should be led to admire the wonders of God's providence, who so ordered it, that the exposing of the child should prove the means of his exaltation; and that he who was one day to deliver the people of Israel from the tyranny of the Egyptians, should be brought up by the daughter of that very prince who had undertaken to destroy the Israelites.

 CHAP. XXXI.

God appeared to Moses, and commissioned him to deliver Israel. From the third and fourth Chapters of Exodus. A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither:

put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: and I have said, I will bring you up out of the afflictions of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt; and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a ser-

pent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom; and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the Lord said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and I will teach you what ye shall do.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was the employment of Moses?—How did the angel of God appear unto him?—For what purpose did the angel tell Moses that he had appeared to him?—By whom was Moses directed to tell the Egyptians he was sent unto them?—What miracles was Moses enabled to work in proof of his divine commission?—What reason did he give for not wishing to go to Pharaoh?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

By the miracle of the bush which Moses saw in flames without being consumed, God was pleased to engage his attention, and convince him that he was there in a peculiar manner present. After this, God spake to Moses, and assured him that the time was come in which he had determined to deliver his people from the tyranny of Pharaoh, and fulfil

the promises he had before made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This might serve to confirm Moses in his mission, and convince the Israelites themselves that Moses was sent to them from God, and that the time of their deliverance was come. Hence we see that God is always faithful to his covenant and promises; and that it is impossible he should ever forsake his church and his people.

From the repeated refusal of Moses to go and speak to the king of Egypt, and from what God did to engage him to obedience, we learn, that when God calls, it is our duty to obey the call, without fearing any thing, and without hearkening to the suggestions of the flesh, which are apt to lead us aside from our duty. The promises that God made to be with Moses, the signs by which he confirmed the promises, and the power he gave him to work miracles, intimate to us that God always affords strength and means sufficient for the execution of his commands, and that he is always with his servants wherever he sends them.

CHAP. XXXII.

The Heart of Pharaoh hardened. From the fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth Chapters of Exodus. A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.



MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

AND afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?

I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the task-masters of the people, and their officers, saying, Let more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the Lord had said.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt: and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so: for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the

land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; and say unto him, If thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses. And the Lord did so: and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.

And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people: there remained not one. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Then the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast. And Pharaoh hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground: and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail,

and fire mingled with the hail very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. Neither would he let the children of Israel go.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Now, therefore, forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only. And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord. And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea: there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more: for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What reply did Pharaoh make Moses when requested to let the children of Israel go?—How did he treat them?—What was the first miracle wrought by Aaron before Pharaoh?—What other miracles were wrought before Pharaoh previous to letting the children of Israel depart?—Which of the miracles of Aaron were imitated by the magicians?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a very common case, that the methods which God uses to bring sinners to repentance are perverted by them to a quite contrary end, and leave them more incorrigible than they found them. If he prospers them, they think he is pleased: if he casts them down, and raises them again, they hope he is reconciled, though they are not reformed. The constancy of his application to them passes into customary form, and they grow just like that perverse kind of people, who, the more they are courted and entreated to do a thing which is plainly for their own good, the more resolutely they set themselves against it. The methods which God takes to soften and bend sinners may end in their greater hardness and stubbornness; and since this worst effect will too often result from the best designs, God may be said to harden them, but cannot, without the greatest injustice, be said to be the author of their sins. His dealings with them, whether he spare or punish them, have all one voice, and call out to them, as they did here, to turn from the errors of their ways, to cease to do evil, and learn to do well. But if that which should have been for their salvation proves the cause of their destruction, the fault cannot be in good means, but only in the abuse of them.

We see, then, that when God says, he raised up Pharaoh for this cause, that he might magnify his power and glory in his punishment, he does not mean that he made him either a man or a king with such a view; but that he preserved him from the fatal stroke of former visitations, that he did not expire under them, but his life was prolonged for further

trials and exercises of the same kind. We are not therefore to suppose that God infused into the heart of Pharaoh any bad qualities, or ungodly resolutions; but only did not vouchsafe to him those convictions which might have softened him; "and he gave him up to his own heart's lust," and likewise ordered things so to fall out, that he became more and more obdurate.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The Children of Israel depart out of Egypt; and the Destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. From the twelfth and fourteenth Chapters of Exodus. A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, (all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army,) and overtook them encamping by the sea. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry

ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.

And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them, to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.

BRIEF REVIEW

How long did the children of Israel sojourn in Egypt?—What did Pharaoh do, on being told that they were gone?—By what miracle of Moses were they enabled to escape from Pharaoh?—What became of Pharaoh?—What effect did these miracles produce on the Israelites?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The events recorded in this chapter are truly astonishing; and they strongly mark what God *can* do, and what he *will* do, both against his enemies, and in behalf of his followers. In vain are all the forces of Egypt united to destroy the Israelites: at the breath of God's mouth they perish: and his feeble, discouraged, unarmed followers take the prey! With such a history before their eyes, is it not strange that sinners should run on frowardly in the path of transgression; and that those who are redeemed from the world, should ever doubt of the all-sufficiency and goodness of God!

The case of the Israelites is not a solitary one: most of those who are called *Christians*, are not more remarkable for faith and patience. Every reverse will necessarily pain and discompose the people who are seeking their portion in this life. And it is a sure mark of a worldly mind, when we trust the God of providence and grace no farther than we see the operations of his hand in our immediate supply; and murmur and repine when the hand of his bounty seems closed, and the influences of his Spirit restrained; though our unthankful and unholy carriage has been the *cause* of this change. Those alone who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God shall be lifted up in due season.

CHAP. XXXIV.

The Song of Moses on the Overthrow of Pharaoh. From the fifteenth Chapter of Exodus.
A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

THEN sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders! Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone—till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen

into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them: but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels, and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most ancient of all poems now extant, at least, of those the age of which has been ascertained, is this thanksgiving ode of Moses, after the passage of the Red Sea: it is, at the same time, most perfect in its kind. It shows the early connection which subsisted between poetry and religion; and is an example of that species of poetical composition which the Hebrews cultivated more than all other sorts, and in which they particularly excelled; namely, the rendering of public thanks in songs of triumph to God, for prosperity in their enterprises, and for success in war.

Those events in providence, and those experiences in the life of faith which have occasioned our most distressing apprehensions, often terminate in such a manner as to fill our hearts with gratitude, and our mouths with praises: nor would the Lord lead those whom he loves into straits, did he not intend to render them subservient to his own glory, and to their comfort and advantage.—When we have patiently and quietly waited for deliverance out of trouble, and have had our expectations answered, we should proclaim to all around us the wonderful works of God; and every one in the improvement of his talent, and the exercise of his peculiar endowments, should concur in so pleasant and reasonable a service.—They who oppress the people of God are his declared enemies, over whom he will at length triumph completely: and all shall acknowledge that he is not only “glorious in power,” but “glorious in holiness” in their destruction, and in that of all impenitent sinners. But they who humbly submit to him, and trust in his mercy, will find that he “is become their salvation,” and “he will compass them about with songs of deliverance.”

CHAP. XXXV.

The Israelites fed on Manna. From the sixteenth Chapter of Exodus. A. M. 2513.—
B. C. 1491.

AND they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness which is between Elim and Sinai. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wil-

derness : and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full ; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord, for he hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel ; speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread : and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp : and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground : and when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna : for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.

This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating : an omer for every man according to the number of your persons, take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack : they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto Moses ; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and was spoiled : and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating : and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord. Abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord com-

manded, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations ; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited ; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did the children of Israel say when they came into the wilderness?—How were they then supplied with food?—When did they collect the manna?—How were they to be supplied with it on the Sabbath?—How was their posterity to know of this miraculous supply of bread in the wilderness?—How long were they supplied with manna?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

That the manna was a type of our blessed Redeemer, and of the salvation which he has provided for man, there can be no doubt ; for in this way, it is applied by Christ himself ; and from it, we may gather this general conclusion, that salvation is of the Lord. The Israelites must have perished in the wilderness, had not God fed them with bread from heaven. And every human soul must have perished, had not Jesus Christ come down from heaven, and given himself for the life of the world. God would have the Israelites continually dependent on himself for all their supplies ; but he would make them in a certain way, workers with him. He provided the manna ; they gathered and ate it. The first was God's work ; the latter their own. They could not *produce* the manna, and God would not gather it for them. Thus the providence of God appears in such a way as to secure the *coöperation* of man. Though man should *plant* and *water*, yet it is God who giveth the increase. But, if man neither plant nor water, God will give no increase. We cannot do God's work, and he will not do ours. Let us, therefore, both in things spiritual and temporal, *be workers together with HIM.*

CHAP. XXXVI.

The Ten Commandments given on Mount Sinai. From the nineteenth and twentieth Chapters of Exodus. A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

IN the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai ; and there Israel encamped before the mount.

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud : so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God ; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire : and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount : and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount ; and Moses went up. And the Lord said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee : but let not the priests and the people break through, to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them. So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.



THE COMMANDMENTS DELIVERED AT MOUNT SINAI.

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness

of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it. Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How long after leaving Egypt did the Israelites encamp before mount Sinai?—What miraculous appearances did the mount present?—Through whom did God deliver the law to the Israelites?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In this chapter we have met with some of the most awful displays of the Divine majesty: manifestations of justice and holiness which have had no parallel, and can have none, until that day arise, in which he shall appear in his glory, to judge the quick and the dead. The glory was truly terrible, and to the children of Israel insufferable: and yet

how highly privileged, to have God himself speaking to them from the midst of the fire, giving them statutes and judgments, so righteous, so pure, so holy, and so truly excellent in their operation and their end, that they have been the admiration of all the wise and upright, in all countries and ages of the world, where their voice has been heard.

Though we neither hear the thunders, nor see the lightnings, nor witness the awful circumstances with which the holy law was given; and though we are not appalled by the voice of God himself, speaking to us from the top of blazing Sinai; yet if we attend to the things then spoken, we shall perceive that we have as much occasion to tremble for ourselves as Israel had when they stood at the foot of the mountain. This law, which is so extensive that we cannot measure it, so spiritual that we cannot evade it, and so reasonable that we cannot find fault with it, will be the rule of the future judgment of God, as it is of the present conduct of man. Nor would it consist with the glory of the Lord's perfection, the honour of his government, the interest of his universal and everlasting kingdom, or even with the felicity of his rational creatures, to reverse, repeal, or relax one precept of it; for it is all perfectly "holy, just, and good."

CHAP. XXXVII.

Moses consecrateth Aaron and his Sons. From the eighth Chapter of Leviticus.
A. M. 2514.—B. C. 1490.



MOSES CONSECRATING AARON AND HIS SONS.

AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his

sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. And he put the breast-plate upon him: also he put in the breast-plate the Urim and the Thummim. And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him. And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the Lord commanded Moses.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In these types we see our great High-Priest, as solemnly appointed, anointed, and invested in his sacred office; and, by his own blood and the influences of his Holy Spirit, sanctifying the ordinances of religion to the benefit of his people, and to the honour of God, who, for his sake, accepts our worship, though we are sinners, and it is *polluted with sin*. We may also rejoice that, though free from sin himself, yet having suffered, being tempted, he is a merciful and faithful High-Priest, full of tender compassion to the feeble-minded and afflicted soul, and that having finished his consecration and sacrifices upon earth, as our *perfected* High-Priest, he for ever appears in the presence of God for us.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Sundry Laws. From the nineteenth Chapter of Leviticus. A. M. 2514.—B. C. 1490.

AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.

Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the Lord your God.

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.

Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night, until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord. Ye shall keep my statutes and my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord. And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, and just weights shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All these laws are of the greatest importance, and most of them regard Christians as well as they did the Jews. The duties here enjoined are such as these: To honour father and mother; to respect religion; to serve God with a free heart; and, in conformity to his holy word, to be charitable to the poor; and not to be covetous, particularly in times of harvest and vintage, and gathering of fruits. We are likewise taught here, that it is a great sin before God to injure our neighbour, to take a false oath, to withhold the labourer's wages, and to deride those who have any bodily defects, as the deaf and blind, or to do them any harm; and to have respect to persons in the execution of justice or judgment, either by favouring the poor and needy, or paying a deference to the rich and great. Lastly, we here learn to abstain from slander, hatred, and revenge; to rebuke our neighbour when he sins, and love him as ourselves; to respect old age; to do justice to strangers, and to use true weights and measures. These are duties of piety, purity, and justice, which concern all men without exception; and they are still more strictly commanded by the law of Jesus Christ, than they were by the law of Moses; so that they are to Christians still more sacred and inviolable.

 CHAP. XXXIX.

A Blasphemer Stoned. From the twenty-fourth Chapter of Leviticus. A. M. 2514.—
B. C. 1490.

AND the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp: And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed; and they brought him unto Moses: And they put him in ward, that the mind of the Lord might be shewed them.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.

And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones: and the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses.

BRIEF REVIEW.

For what was the son of the Israelitish woman brought to Moses?—
What was then done with him?—How was he punished?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The punishment here recorded of these sins of blasphemy and cursing is very remarkable, and ought to inspire us with a great horror of such sins, of which the punishment ever will be most severe.

What enmity against God must be in the heart of man, when curses and blasphemies against him proceed out of his mouth! And if he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of what punishment will they be thought worthy, who despise and abuse the gospel of the Son of God!

 CHAP. XL.

The Jubilee. From the twenty-fifth Chapter of Leviticus. A. M. 2514.—B. C. 1490.

AND the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land; a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest, thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, and for thy cattle, and for the beasts that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat.

And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye

shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. It is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession.

BRIEF REVIEW

Where did the Lord speak unto Moses?—What time was to be spent in labour?—How was the seventh year to be spent?—What was every fiftieth year to be?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a desirable privilege to have seasons of relaxation from worldly care and employments, that we may have more leisure for the study of the Scriptures, and the concerns of our souls. The poor labourer, too, should be allowed them; and our hearts should rejoice to see him refreshed from his toil, and enjoying the fruits of our liberality. All these statutes teach us “to beware of covetousness; for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of his possessions;” to exercise willing dependence on Providence for our support; to be contented with, and thankful for, food and raiment for the present; and without hesitation, to leave the future to that God, whose blessing suffices abundantly, in various ways which we cannot imagine, to make up every supposed loss, which might be feared in simply obeying his commandments. We should also consider ourselves as the Lord’s tenants and stewards, if we have land or property, and use them accordingly: we should be not only moderate and temperate in our enjoyments, but kind and gentle to our inferiors, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate to our brethren, after his example, “who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.”

CHAP. XLI.

Blessings and Judgments. From the twenty-sixth Chapter of Leviticus. A. M. 2514.—
B. C. 1490.

IF ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit: And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing-time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and mul-

tiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all my commandments; and if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant; I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our true interest and happiness consist in worshipping the Lord, giving him our hearts, hallowing his sabbaths, reverencing his sanctuary, and doing every thing with a believing regard to that Saviour, in whom dwelleth all the fulness "of the Godhead bodily." Our obedience indeed cannot justify us: but that obedience, which takes its rise from "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," and consists in an humble attendance on his ordinances, and an unreserved respect to all his commandments, both evinces that we are justified, and will induce peace and spiritual consolations into our hearts, with the hope of glory, and the blessing of God upon our families and possessions; so that the most afflicted state of a consistent Christian is more comfortable than any ungodly prosperity. - This frame of mind is the health of the soul, and the antipast to heaven, whilst God sets up his tabernacle in us, and dwells and walks with us, as the sure pledge of eternal glory. But wilful sin, even in a Christian, will grieve the Spirit, cloud this bright prospect, and bring darkness and distress into the soul, as well as chastisements from his heavenly Father's rod. Righteousness also exalteth a nation, and, amongst other blessings, ensures the continuance of the gospel with it.

CHAP. XLII.

The Rebellion of Korah and his Punishment. From the sixteenth Chapter of Numbers.
A. M. 2533.—B. C. 1471.

Now Korah, and Dathan, and Abiram, rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown : and they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them : wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord ?

And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face : And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy ; and will cause him to come near unto him : even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do—Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow : and take every man his censers, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censor, two hundred and fifty censers ; thou also and Aaron each of you his censor.

And they took every man his censor, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation : and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation ?

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up, and went unto Dathan and Abiram ; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side : and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.

And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them, fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who rebelled against Moses?—Of what did they accuse Moses and Aaron?—What did Moses tell Korah and his company to do?—What became of them?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The history of the sedition raised against Moses and Aaron, by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and of the terrible punishment God inflicted upon them, and those that were joined with them, is very memorable: the earth opening and swallowing up the former, and fire from heaven consuming the latter. This severe vengeance, which confirmed the authority of Moses and Aaron, shews also that every one ought to abide in his calling, and submit himself to the order which God has established; that none ought to assume to themselves the honour of the ministry, nor exercise its functions, unless God has called them to it; and that those who disturb the peace of civil society, or the order of the Church, by setting themselves up against those whom God has placed in authority over them, strive against God himself, and expose themselves to his vengeance. We are likewise informed in this history that Moses endeavoured to appease the rebels, and did by his prayers avert the wrath of God, which was kindling against all the congregation: which was proof of the meekness of this great prophet, and of his love to those who had rebelled against him. Thus ought we, instead of fretting and wishing evil to those that injure us, to labour to bring them back to their duty, and intercede with God for them.

CHAP. XLIII.

The Children of Israel bitten by the fiery Serpents. From the twenty-first Chapter of Numbers. A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

AND the children of Israel journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived.

And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth. And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-abarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sun-rising.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where did the children of Israel journey?—What did they say to Moses?—What punishment did the Lord send upon them for this murmuring?—How were the people cured?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

From the history of the fiery serpents, we may observe, on the one hand, that as the Israelites fell again into their old sin of murmuring, they drew upon themselves new plagues: by all which God destroyed by degrees the whole generation that came out of Egypt, and which was not to enter into the land of Canaan. On the other hand, the wonderful manner in which the people were healed of the biting of those serpents, by means of a brazen serpent, must needs convince them that it was God who sent among them the fiery serpents, and that he alone was their deliverer from them. But above all, this history ought to bring into our minds the words of our Lord, "As Moses lifted up the serpent

in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life:" and what Paul says, "Let us not tempt Christ as the Israelites tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." We see in the brazen fiery serpents a lively figure of the Christian Sacraments; and how God has shown, and can show his power; and can sanctify water to the washing away of sin, and make bread and wine instruments of our salvation.

CHAP. XLIV.

Containing an Account of Balak and Balaam. From twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth Chapters of Numbers. A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

AND the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed and came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak. And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee? And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me; for I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord ~~my~~ God, to do less or more.

Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more. And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning and went with the princes of Moab.

And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the utmost coast. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour? And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, Thus thou shalt speak. And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? for from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast blessed them altogether. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth? God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse

it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt: he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath God wrought? Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his



BALAAM AND BALAK.

tents according to their tribes, and the spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable, and said, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together : and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore, now flee thou to thy place : I thought to promote thee unto great honour ; but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour.

And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord to do either good or bad of mine own mind ; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak ? There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies ; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And Balaam rose up, and went, and returned to his place : and Balak also went his way.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who was Balak?—What message did he send to Balaam?—What did Balaam say to the princes of Balak?—What did Balaam do when he came to Balak?—How was Balak affected when Balaam blessed Israel?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We may observe from this chapter, that although Balak used his utmost endeavours to make Balaam curse the children of Israel, and though Balaam, allured by the promises of that prince, would have been really glad to do it, yet God did not permit him, but, on the contrary, obliged him to bless them. This shews that God always rules over the wicked, that he does not suffer them to do his children that harm which they desire ; nay, that he makes use of them to do them good. Balaam's repeated blessings, and all that he said in favour of the children of Israel, should have convinced the Moabites that they were the favourites of Heaven, and that nothing can hurt those whom God loves and designs to bless.

The case of Balaam furnishes a very striking instance of that inconsistency into which irreligious and worldly-minded persons frequently fall. Although preferring the wages of unrighteousness, he still exclaims, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ! In view of such an inconsistency, let us firmly persuade ourselves of this fundamental truth, that there is a state of just retribution after the expiration of the short term we have here ; and that this life is but a state of probation, in which, according as we acquit ourselves, so shall we be consigned to everlasting happiness or misery hereafter. And let this convince us, how nearly, how vastly it concerns us, to make the best im-

provement of that proportion of time which is here allotted to us. Let us consider that our eternity depends upon it; and therefore let us make it the business of our whole lives to prepare for that great change, which we must undergo by death. Let us not flatter ourselves with fond and fallacious hopes, that this preparation may be sufficiently made, and all danger seasonably enough provided against, by the disturbed and confused thoughts which the nearer apprehension and approach of death is wont to excite.

CHAP. XLV.

Moses dissuadeth the Children of Israel against Self-Righteousness. From the ninth Chapter of Deuteronomy. A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

HEAR, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven. Understand therefore this day that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee. Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people. Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord. Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you. I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin; lest the land whence thou broughtest us out, say,

Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched-out arm.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It may be thought, that the Jews, being God's chosen people, ought to be found superior in benevolence as well as every other virtue, to the rest of mankind. But it must ever be remembered what God himself frequently declares, that it was not for their "own sakes," for their own "righteousness," that they were chosen, but for other reasons; for preserving the knowledge, and promoting the worship of the one true God; for manifesting his Divine power in the working of miracles, and for executing his judgments on those impenitent nations, whose enormous wickedness was then ripe for vengeance. The moral goodness therefore of the Jews being no peculiar object of God's choice, we are not on that account merely to expect from them any uncommon degree of virtue, or any exemption from the reigning vices of their age.

Of all the attributes of God, forbearance, perhaps, is that which we have most to acknowledge. We cannot want occasions to bring the remembrance of it to our thoughts. Have there not been occasions, in which, ensnared by vice, we might have been detected and exposed; have been crushed by punishment or shame; have been irrecoverably ruined? occasions in which we might have been suddenly stricken with death, in a state of soul the most unfit for it that was possible? That we were none of these, that we have been preserved from these dangers, that our sin was not our destruction, that instant judgment did not overtake us, is to be attributed to the long suffering of God. We were not destroyed, when we might have been destroyed; and when we merited destruction, we have been reserved for further trial. This is, or ought to be, a touching reflection. How deeply therefore does it behoove us, not to trifle with the patience of God, not to abuse this enlarged space, this respited, protracted season of repentance, by plunging afresh into the same crimes, or other, or greater crimes? It shows that we are not wrought upon by mercy; that our gratitude is not moved; that things are wrong within us; that there is a deplorable void and chasm in our religious principles, the love of God not being present in our hearts.

CHAP. XLVI.

An Exhortation to Obedience. From the tenth and eleventh Chapters of Deuteronomy. A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

AND NOW, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with

all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the fore-skin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen. Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give unto them, and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey. For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain, and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them. And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you.

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in

your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates; that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The true principles of Christian obedience, as they are every where set forth in Scripture, are the love and fear of God—which are so far from being inconsistent with each other, that they are inseparable; the one deterring us from sin, the other exciting us to virtue and righteousness. They are both put together in these expressive words, in which Moses sums up his exhortation to the Israelites—“And now what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?” The royal preacher concludes his discourse to the same effect, but more shortly, thus—“Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty,” or the whole business, “of man.” And St. John tells us, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.”

CHAP. XLVII.

The Blessings of Obedience. From the twenty-eighth Chapter of Deuteronomy.
A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

AND it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing

upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto: and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All events are absolutely at the disposal of God, all creatures are his servants. If he determine to bless us, he can grant us health, riches, and reputation, and give fruitful fields, flourishing families, and peaceful habitations: he communicates every temporal good, with the ordinances of his courts, and the graces of his Spirit. He can even connect great honour with deep humility, and give success in every undertaking, comfort in every connection, and abundance of all things with a thankful, liberal, and spiritual mind; yet all this is very little compared with that future, everlasting, and complete felicity, in the contemplation of which, our thoughts and our language are absolutely swallowed up.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Joshua succeeds Moses, and conducts the Children of Israel over Jordan. From the first, second, and third Chapters of Joshua. A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to

go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people; and they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you—behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap: and those that came down toward the sea failed and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place where ye shall lodge this night.

Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: and Joshua said

unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Whose son was Joshua?—Who carried the ark?—What took place with the waters as soon as the priests dipped their feet in them?—What did Joshua do for a memorial of this event?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This world is a dreary wilderness; and, although nourished with the bread of heaven and the waters of life from the rock of salvation, Christians are often weary of their toilsome pilgrimage. And if they are able to keep the eye of faith on the Saviour, and on the inheritance provided for them in heaven, they may meet death in its most awful forms, without terror.

Let us then treasure up our experiences of his faithful and tender care in the whole course of our lives, that they may come in aid to our faith and hope in this last conflict; let us carefully consider the examples of others, whose happy death we witness, or of which we read and hear, to allay our fears, and encourage our hearts; let us prepare daily for this important season, by faith and repentance, and a conscientious attention to the duties of our station; and let us watch and pray against anxious or distressing fears. The Lord will provide for our passage over this Jordan, when the time comes; yea, he will come and meet us, and by his animating presence invigorate our faith and hope, till we join the innumerable multitude, that in the Canaan above are singing the praises of their great Deliverer, who hath both redeemed them from Egyptian bondage, and brought them safe to the promised land, through his precious blood, and by his all-conquering arm.

CHAP. XLIX.

The two Tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh build an Altar. From the twenty-second Chapter of Joshua. A. M. 2561.—B. C. 1443.

AND the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go into the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.

And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord? Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord, but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord? and it will be, seeing ye rebel to-day against the Lord, that to-morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.

Then the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, answered and said unto the heads of the

thousands of Israel: The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, save us not this day, that we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer thereon burnt-offering, or meat-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let the Lord himself require it; and if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord. So shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord.

Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice: but that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before him with our burnt-offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace-offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord. God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God that is before his tabernacle.

And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation, and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, spake, it pleased them. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord.

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where did the two tribes and a half build an altar?—What did the children of Israel do when they heard of it?—Why did the children of Israel propose to make war against them?—How were they affected when told for what purpose the altar was built?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought constantly to watch against a disposition to rash judgment, uncandid surmises, and harsh reproofs; and cultivate and pray for the contrary spirit: but if it prove our trial to be rebuked with severity, and loaded with calumny, we should be thankful for the testimony of our consciences, and for confidence in appealing to our heart-searching Judge, that we are misrepresented or misunderstood. And if the Lord knoweth our innocence, Israel shall know it in due time; for when our consciences are clear, he will at length clear our character, which we may therefore safely commit to his keeping. While exposed to this trial, we ought cautiously to avoid all recriminations, to speak with mildness and seriousness, and be ready to offer such explanations as may obviate misconstructions, and satisfy the minds of our pious and candid brethren; and whatever has been wrong or suspicious, we should be willing to alter. But charity hopeth all things, and rejoiceth not in iniquity: and they who 'abound in this grace also,' will be glad to find themselves mistaken, in the unfavourable opinion of their brethren which they reluctantly entertained; and will bless God for evidences of their faith and piety.

Happy will it be when all professed Christians shall learn, in their differences, to copy the example of Israel recorded in this chapter; and to unite real and steady adherence to the cause of truth, with candor and meekness, a readiness to understand each other, to explain, and be satisfied with the sufficient explanations and concessions of their brethren. When will Christians remember, "that by this shall all men know the disciples of Christ, when they have love one for another?" May the Lord increase the number of those, who "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" and may increasing grace and consolation be with "all who love Jesus Christ in sincerity," by whatever name they are distinguished.

 CHAP. L.

Death of Joshua, and his Exhortation to the Children of Israel. From the twenty-third and twenty-fourth Chapters of Joshua. A. M. 2561.—B. C. 1443.

AND it came to pass, a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age: And ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you: for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.

Take good heed therefore unto yourselves that ye love the Lord

your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

And the people answered, and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Joshua say to Israel on calling them together?—What did he exhort the people to do?—What reply did they make?—How old was Joshua when he died?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In all this exhortation, we see how closely Joshua copies the example of his great master, Moses; he was tenderly concerned for the welfare of the people; and with a deeply affected heart, he spoke to their hearts. No people were ever more fairly and fully warned; and no people profited less by it. The threatenings pronounced here, were accomplished in the Babylonish captivity; but more fully, in their general dispersion since the crucifixion of our Lord. And should not every *Christian* fear when he reads, If God spared not the natural branches, take heed that he spare not thee? Surely a worldly, carnal, and godless *Christian*, has no more reason to expect indulgence from the justice of God, than a profligate *Jew*. We have a goodly land, but the justice of God can decree a captivity from it, or a state of bondage in it. The privileges that are abused, are thereby forfeited. And this is as applicable to the individual, as to the whole system.

Joshua's exhortations to the children of Israel before his death, are a proof of his great zeal and piety, an argument of his sincere affection for that people; and show how much he had at heart the preservation of true religion among them after his death. Those who are appointed rulers of the people, should improve by so noble an example; and learn from hence that it should be their chief care and concern to support the cause of piety and religion in their own time, and provide for its support among those who come after them. These remonstrances of Joshua teach us likewise that a firm adherence to the service of God and obedience to his laws is the only way to secure the happiness of a nation, as on the contrary disobedience and ungodliness deprive men of the Divine blessing, and bring God's judgments upon them.

 CHAP. LI.

The Song of Deborah and Barak. From the fifth Chapter of Judges. A. M. 2708.—
B. C. 1296.

THEN sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abin'oam on that day, saying, Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel. Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel. My heart is toward the governors of Israel that offered themselves willingly among the people: Bless ye the Lord. Speak ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way. Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song:

arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abin'oam. Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty. Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea-shore, Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. The kings came and fought by the waters of Megid'do; they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sis'era. The river of Ki'shon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Ki'shon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Ken'ite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent. He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sis'era, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead. The mother of Sis'era looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, Have they not sped; have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sis'era a prey of divers colours; a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil? So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The song of Deborah shows that that woman was as famous for her piety and zeal, as for her courage and conduct; wherein she may serve for an example, not only to persons of her own sex, but to all that are in authority; and teach them to trust in God alone, and give him the glory of all their success. It appears also from hence, that the custom of singing public hymns of praise to God for signal mercies received, was very ancient; which should excite our zeal and gratitude, not only for the

temporal favors we receive, but especially for spiritual blessings and deliverances; referring all to the power and goodness of God, praising and blessing him in a public and solemn manner.

CHAP. LII.

History of Ruth. From the first and second Chapters of Ruth. About B. C. 1250.

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two



NAOMI AND HER DAUGHTERS.

sons. And the name of the man was Eлим'elech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons Mahlon and Chili'on, E'phrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Eлим'elech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chili'on died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. And they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me?

And they lifted up their voice, and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of the barley-harvest.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers.

And behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto his reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set

over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi; and she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine hand-maid.

And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed.

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not; and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed. And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen. It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz.

to glean unto the end of barley-harvest and of wheat-harvest ; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How was Ruth related to Naomi?—What was the name of Ruth's sister-in-law?—What did Naomi say to them when her sons died?—What rich kinsman had Naomi?—How came he to become acquainted with Ruth?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The virtue and piety of Naomi are well deserving of attention, who when she had lost her husband and her two sons in a strange land, preserved a tender affection for her two daughters-in-law, although they were women of Moab; and bore with patience and resignation the several afflictions with which the Lord was pleased to visit her, in the loss of her husband and sons, and returned to her own country, as soon as she could, to worship God according to the law.

Educated in the school of affliction, and called to penury by him, who at his pleasure divideth to every one as he will, Ruth goes forth to glean in the fields of Boaz. The Divine Providence which conducted her thither, gives her an early recompense for her love and duty to Naomi. From the reapers she experiences kindness; from their lord, generosity, protection, friendship. Even this was a presage of her better estate. She returns wealthy with her ephah of barley, and blesses the liberality of her benefactor. Wisely did Naomi counsel her not to be seen in any other field while the harvest lasted. A grateful acceptance of favours is in some measure a requital of them. The God of heaven bestows on us his most precious gifts. O let us not desert him, nor turn to the world, which can only afford us vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAP. LIII.

Birth of Samuel, and Song of Hannah. From the first and second Chapters of the first Book of Samuel. A. M. about 2839.—B. C. 1165.

Now there was a man of Mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah; and Hannah his wife bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, I have asked him of the Lord.

And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word.

And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh : and the child was young. And they brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed ; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him : Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord ; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there. And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord ; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies ; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord : for there is none beside thee : neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly : let not arrogancy come out of your mouth : for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread ; and they that were hungry ceased : the Lord killeth and maketh alive : he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich : he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory : for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness ; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces ; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them : the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth ; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and they went unto their own home. And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Whose son was Samuel?—To whom did Hannah carry him on being weaned?—Why did she lend him to the Lord?—What religious act did he perform himself when a child?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and her public solemn thanksgiving to God at Shiloh, are a new proof of her piety, and teach us to express our gratitude, and bless the Lord when he grants us any signal favour. We learn particularly in this song, that Providence overrules all things; that God confounds the proud; that he takes care of the weak and afflicted who fear him; that he protects them, and hears their prayers. This is a doctrine full of comfort and consolation to good men, supporting them in their trials, and leading them to holiness and trust in God. The case of Samuel may be urged as an inducement to early piety. Even the feeble attempts of children to serve God, are noticed with condescending regard, as peculiarly pleasing to him; and it is his standing declaration, that those who seek him early shall find him. What, too, can be more lovely than to see children and youth consecrate to God that breath, which he gave and continually imparts to them!

 CHAP. LIV.

God makes a Revelation to Samuel concerning Eli. From the third Chapter of the first Book of Samuel. A. M. 2863.—B. C. 1141.

AND the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see. And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came, and stood and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I

will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin I will also make an end. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord: and Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me, of all the things that he said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good. And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Before whom did Samuel minister unto the Lord?—What did he say when the Lord called him?—For what was the house of Eli to be punished?—What did Eli say when Samuel made the vision known unto him?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This answer of Eli was truly humble, and humility never appears more sincere than when it disposes us, with an unreserved submission, and perfect resignation, to accept whatever God is pleased to inflict upon us for our sins. In the mouth of Eli, this declaration seems as sincere as it was humble. For although he had grievously offended God, by conniving at his sons' abominable actions, and not restraining them by his judicial or parental authority, nevertheless, the meek submission he expresses for the Divine sentence pronounced against himself and his family, and the testimony he afterwards gave of his much greater concern for the taking of God's ark, than for the death of the two sons whom he had so much indulged, makes it probable that, though a weak man, he was truly humble and pious.

CHAP. LV.

The Israelites repent at Mizpeh, and the Philistines subdued. From the seventh Chapter of the first Book of Samuel. A. M. 2864.—B. C. 1140.

AND Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods, and Ashtaroth, from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Ba'alim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

And Samuel took a lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them: and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coast thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines: and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

BRIEF REVIEW.

At what place did Samuel direct the Israelites to gather themselves together?—What did they do when assembled together?—By what miracle were the Philistines discomfited?—What did Samuel then do?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The victory gained by the people of Israel over the Philistines, after they had been reconciled to God by humiliation, confession of sins, and fasting, and had put away their idols, teaches us, that God is always ready to be appeased, as soon as men sincerely humble themselves and forsake their sins. We see likewise in this history, that the people, terrified at the approach of the Philistines, had recourse to the intercession of Samuel, who, by his prayers and sacrifices, obtained a miraculous victory, and that the Philistines, affrighted and dispersed by a dreadful thunder, were so defeated that they never more assaulted the people of Israel while Samuel lived. The greatest blessing any people can enjoy, is to have wise rulers, and such as fear God: the prayers of good men, and of the faithful servants of God, are of great efficacy; and for their sakes God often spares and blesses a nation. Lastly, the care that Samuel took to administer justice to the people, ought to be an example to judges and magistrates, and induce them to discharge the duties of their office with the same application and the same integrity as Samuel performed his, all the days of his life.

 CHAP. LVI.

The Israelites ask a king—Samuel anointeth Saul. From the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh Chapters of the first Book of Samuel. B. C. 1112.

AND it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

But the thing displeased Samuel, and Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you : He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen ; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties : and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and put them to his work. And ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you ; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel ; and they said, Nay ; but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations ; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, and he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly ; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he ; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of ! this same shall reign over my people. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance ? And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh ; and said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you : and ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities, and your tribulations ; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands. And Samuel caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, and said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people ! And all the people shouted,

and said, God save the king. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is said of Samuel's sons?—What did the elders of Israel request of Samuel?—Was he pleased with their request?—Whose son was Saul?—To what place did the people go when they made him king?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

God desires not the misery of his creatures, but would have them to be comfortable and happy. He was willing to let this people know the power of a king, before he would change their form of government. Thus he deals with sinners; before he gives them up to their own hearts' lusts, he gives them fair warning what will be the issue of their desires and pursuits; sets life and death before them; lets them know the worst; so that if sinners perish, they have none to blame but themselves. This deserves thankfully to be owned, as an instance of divine compassion and mercy; and it should deter sinners from pursuing evil ways, and lead them to repentance.

CHAP. LVII.

David is anointed king, by Samuel. From the sixteenth Chapter of the first Book of Samuel. A. M. 2941.—B. C. 1063.

AND the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

And it came to pass when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looked on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

Again Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the

sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him : for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him : for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren ; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from the Lord troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on an harp : and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.

Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And David came to Saul, and stood before him : and he loved him greatly ; and he became his armour-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me ; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand : So Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

BRIEF REVIEW.

To whom did the Lord send Samuel?—How many of his sons did Jesse make to pass before Samuel?—What had been David's employment?—To what place did Samuel go after he had anointed David?—How came David to be introduced to Saul?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We must reverence and fear that God who looketh into the heart, and discerns the temper and principle, the affections and thoughts. Samuel, though a wise and good man, was deceived in Jesse's elder sons. If we trust to outward appearances, we shall often be deceived. But let us always remember, that God searches the heart ; he knows who will best fill up particular stations, and often fixes on those persons who to us seem most unfit ; and rejects others, who appear more likely. At length

it will appear that we were mistaken. Let this be a caution to us to guard our hearts; to see that we act upon right principles, and for good ends, for God cannot be deceived. We learn also, to judge of others by their tempers, and not by outward appearances; to value those most, whose minds are most holy, whose tempers are kind and obliging; not those who are only eminent for a comely countenance or height of stature; and who, like him whom Samuel thought the Lord would choose, are proud, surly, and passionate.

CHAP. LVIII.

Goliath slain by David. From the seventeenth Chapter of the first Book of Samuel.
A. M. 2941.—B. C. 1063.

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and one bearing a shield went before him.

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them, behold there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the

Philistines, and spake according to the same words : and David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up ? surely to defy Israel is he come up : and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel ? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God ? And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him. And he turned from him towards another, and spake after the same manner : and the people answered him again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul : and he sent for him.

And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him ; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him : for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock : And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth : and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip ; and his sling was in his hand : and he drew near to the Philistine.

And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him : for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves ? and the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield : but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel,

whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear : for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead ; and he fell upon his face to the earth. Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem ; but he put his armour in his tent.

And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth ? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man ? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How was Goliath armed?—For how long time did he present himself before the men of Israel?—With what was David armed?—Which prevailed?—What became of the Philistines when Goliath was slain.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

David excelled not only king Saul, but perhaps all other kings that ever reigned, in this ; that as he rejoiced to do the will of God, and to fight his battles, so he went about his work with a singular alacrity, a marvellous affiance in God and dependence on his arm for succour and assistance. When he heard the proud boastings of this Philistine, his zeal was fired for God and his country. He considered his gigantic enemy no otherwise than the lion or bear who came to devour his flock. He knew, that by the general law and sentence of God, the Philistines were doomed to destruction, and that Goliath had more particularly deserved it, by the reproaches and revilings which he had cast on God and his people. He therefore entered the lists, as one who fought under the banners of the God of Israel, and appeared in vindication of his honour and glory.

While we cannot fail to admire the resolution and courage of David, in offering to encounter Goliath, and above all his religious trust in Almighty God, we must be particularly struck with his wonderful success, in slaying the giant with such a weapon as a sling. In all this it visibly appears, that God assisted David in an extraordinary manner; and also that he was pleased to vindicate his own honour, which Goliath had attacked, and made those idolaters sensible that he was the Almighty God. Thus we likewise see how God helps those that trust in him, and makes use of means, in appearance very weak, to bring down the pride of the wicked, and to destroy those powers which seem to be most formidable.

CHAP. LIX.

David greatly beloved by Jonathan, and hated by Saul. From the eighteenth and nineteenth Chapters of the first Book of Samuel. A. M. 2941.—B. C. 1063.

AND it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and it came to pass that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son-in-law. And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed? and the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred of the Philistines, to be avenged of

the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee: now, therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.

And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What took place between David and Jonathan?—What did the women say who went out to meet Saul?—Whom did David marry?—What did Saul direct Jonathan and all his servants to do to David?—How did David escape from the messengers sent by Saul to take him?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jonathan's love to David sprang from a nobler principle than that which binds one brave soldier to another. David's combat with Goliath had showed him in a more exalted character than that of a soldier: the pretensions he set forth before he engaged, and the success he met with, showed him to be a favorite servant of the Lord's; and there was a principle of religion, as well as a military sympathy, which knit the soul of Jonathan to the soul of David.

In God's designation of David to fill the throne of Israel, he saw what was contrary to his own natural expectation: for his birth and character might naturally point him out as his father's successor. But when he was led to conclude, by David's conduct and success, that God had designed it otherwise, he had prudence and religion enough to submit to the appointment; and, instead of hating a man who was to set him aside from his father's throne, he loved the man who was qualified to fill it, and fixed his esteem where God had fixed his choice.

Jonathan gave noble proofs, indeed, of his friendship for David, and of his virtue, when he used his utmost endeavours to pacify his father, and spake with so much respect and resolution in behalf of his friend, to reconcile his father to him. By this means he discharged his duty to his friend, and, at the same time, to his father, by inspiring him with more just sentiments. Thus ought we ever to take part with the innocent, when persecuted unjustly, never to be backward in our good offices toward others, and to use all means of appeasing those that are enraged.

 CHAP. LX.

David consults with Jonathan for his Safety, and fleeth from Saul. From the twentieth Chapter of the First Book of Samuel. A. M. 2942.—B. C. 1062.

AND David came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? And David moreover said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death. Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?

And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee; for if I knew certainly

that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time or the third day, and behold, if there be good towards David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee, the Lord do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and



DAVID AND JONATHAN.

Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him.

And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem: and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother he hath commanded me to be there: There-

fore he cometh not unto the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. So Jonathan arose from the table, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David. And David arose out of a place towards the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Jonathan promise David?—What did Jonathan tell Saul, when he inquired where David was?—What did Saul then direct Jonathan to do?—What took place when Jonathan went into the field to David?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We may readily pronounce, that it was the sense, not of his own distress, but of Jonathan's generosity, which now overwhelmed David. He was leaving, perhaps taking his last leave, of that man, who, though he knew David stood between him and the throne, yet had often saved his life, and was now just come from saving it again, at the imminent hazard of his own. And how was he leaving this invaluable friend? He was leaving him to the rage of a furious, incensed father, who would not fail to destroy him for the very kindness he was then showing David, if it ever came to his knowledge. Jonathan was too delicate and too generous not to see all the movements of David's heart on this distressful occasion; and seeing them, he repressed his own grief, for fear of sinking his friend too much by excess of tenderness. This made him conclude the conference in that religious and calm manner recorded in the next verse, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.

CHAP. LXI.

David in a Cave at En'gedi spareth Saul's life. From the twenty-fourth Chapter of the First Book of Samuel. A. M. 2943.—B. C. 1061.

AND it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En'gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord. So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way. David also rose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord hath delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking

these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me; forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

BRIEF REVIEW.

With how many men did Saul go in pursuit of David?—What took place at a cave of En'gedi?—What did David say to Saul afterwards?—How was Saul affected by this treatment from David?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The history related in this chapter sets before us a surprising instance of mildness and moderation. David had it in his power to kill Saul, his cruel and unjust persecutor, and did not do it: he would not even suffer his people to do him any harm, and spake to him with all the humility and respect imaginable. A good man never delivers himself by unlawful means; but uses even those who do him the greatest mischief with meekness and gentleness, and instead of revenging himself, returns all the good he can for evil. It is remarkable, that Saul, notwithstanding the hatred he bore to David, was so affected with this treatment, that he wept, and was even forced to bless him, and to own that David was more righteous than he, and to declare openly, that God would reward his virtue, and make him king. A mild, prudent, and gentle behaviour, is of great efficacy in pacifying those who are the most prejudiced against us; and by humbling ourselves, we soften the hardest hearts. This ought to induce us the more to the practice of those virtues, which besides are so conformable to our calling and duty as Christians, and which our blessed Redeemer has so expressly recommended to us, both by his precepts and example.

CHAP. LXII.

David persuadeth Abish'ai from killing Saul. From the twenty-sixth Chapter of the First Book of Samuel. A. M. 2944.—B. C. 1060.

AND David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay. And Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him. Then answered

David and said, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? and Abish'ai said, I will go down with thee. So David and Abish'ai came to the people by night: and behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

Then said Abish'ai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abish'ai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked.

Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them: and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing 'is not good that thou hast done. As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? and David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?

Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life

be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where did David find Saul?—Who accompanied David?—What did Abish'ai propose to do?—What prevented him from killing Saul?—How did David give Saul new proof of his friendship?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have here a fresh instance of the piety and moderation of David, who, when he had the second opportunity of killing Saul, would not do it. This proceeding was yet the more commendable in David, because he had spared Saul once before; and this prince, though moved with his generosity, ceased not still to persecute him. Let us learn from hence, to avoid revenge; never to return evil for evil; and never to be weary of behaving ourselves with gentleness towards those persons that treat us with the greatest injustice, though they continue their evil machinations against us. Lastly, the effect that David's moderation had upon Saul, shows us, how powerfully innocence, meekness, and humility work upon those who would do us harm; and that the worst of men are forced at last to declare in favor of the righteous. But supposing by this means we should not be able to pacify those that hate us, we shall secure to ourselves the divine favor; for, as David says, the Lord will reward every one according to his righteousness.

CHAP. LXIII.

Death of Saul and his Sons, and David's Lamentation. From the thirty-first Chapter of the first Book of Samuel, and the first Chapter of the second Book of Samuel.
A. M. 2948.—B. C. 1056.

Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gil'boa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abin'adab, and Melchishu'a, Saul's sons. Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with

him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together. And when the men of Israel saw that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

It came even to pass that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul, and Jonathan his son, are dead also.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son: The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of As'kelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gil'boa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was the end of Saul and of his sons?—What became of the children of Israel on the death of Saul and his sons?—Who informed David of the event?—How was David affected with it?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The death of Saul is well deserving of our serious attention. This prince, who had been chosen by God to the throne, and who began his

reign so well, made a miserable end; and the threatenings denounced against him by God on several occasions were fully put in execution. Thus it always has been, and always will be, with the divine denunciations, whether against particular persons or against sinners in general. This event ought to inspire us with a wholesome fear, and to impress us with the conviction, that those who are enriched by God with blessings, and who abuse those blessings, are at last abandoned by him, and made examples of his indignation.

Death knows no partial distinctions; even Jonathan himself is involved in the common destruction. If valour, if holiness, if sincerity of heart, could have averted the fatal blow, Jonathan would have survived; the son of Saul would have lived, to share in the prosperity of the son of Jesse; to rejoice in his possession of a throne, to which himself made no pretensions, the rival of David only in friendship and in virtue. God willed it otherwise; he had brighter rewards in store for that illustrious youth than an earthly diadem. The arrows of the Philistines dismiss the royal Jonathan to a more exceeding weight of glory than that which he relinquished to the brother of his love.

CHAP. LXIV.

David forbidden to build a House to God, and his Prayer on the Occasion. From the seventh Chapter of the second Book of Samuel, which is essentially the same as the seventeenth Chapter of the first Book of Chronicles. A. M. 2962.—B. C. 1042.

AND it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies, that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart: for the Lord is with thee.

And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more: neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more as beforetime: And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest

from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God. And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How did God make known to David that he was not to build the temple?—What important promise was made to David at the same time?—What promise was made concerning the perpetuity of the kingdom in the house of David?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

David, after he had received the foregoing gracious promise from the prophet, offered up this excellent prayer to God, and returned most hearty thanks; expressing his faith and firm dependence on the promises of God, his great zeal for his glory, his joy and gratitude, and, above all, his profound humility. In this prayer he likewise implores, with great fervency of devotion, the Divine blessing on himself and on his family. This example should incite us to celebrate the goodness of the Lord towards us, with hearts sincerely sensible of his mercies, and of our own unworthiness; and continually to implore the Divine favour and benediction, with all the fervency of true devotion.

 CHAP. LXV.

Nathan's Parable. From the twelfth Chapter of the second Book of Samuel.
A. M. 2970.—B. C. 1034.

AND the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city: the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's

house, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah ; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child ; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth : but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead : for they said, Behold while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him and he would not hearken unto our voice : how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead : therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped : then he came to his own house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted, and wept : for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? but now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was the substance of Nathan's parable?—What reply did David make to it?—What did David say when the prophet applied it to him?—When did the child of David die?—How did David learn that the child was dead?—What did he say, when asked why he ceased to weep, after the child was dead?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The arguments by which David composed his own mind after the death of his child, are very proper for us, when mourning the death of desirable children. It was a very solid consideration that all his grief could not recover his child. This shows the necessity of endeavouring to compose our minds, and not to give a loose to our passions. He further reflected, that he should quickly go after it. Considering himself as a mortal creature, he saw the folly of excessive grief. When friends die, we should think of our own death; how quickly we shall go after them: therefore we have something else to do than to waste our time in fruitless sorrow. The words intimate further, that looking beyond the grave, he saw something to assuage his grief, some views of future happiness. The prospect of meeting our fellow creatures again, and being for ever with them, is a source of comfort and joy when they are taken away.

 CHAP. LXVI.

Conspiracy and Death of Absalom. From the fourteenth, fifteenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth Chapters of the second Book of Samuel. A. M. 2977.—B. C. 1027.

In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And it came to pass that

A. M. 2979. Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty
B. C. 1025. men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early,
and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so,

that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? and he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

A. M. 2983. And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom
B. C. 1021. said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay
my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode in Syria, say-

ing, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

And the king went forth, and all his household, and all the people after him.

And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went bare-foot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

And one told David, saying, Ahith'ophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahith'ophel into foolishness.

And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abish'ai, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.

And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands. And the king commanded Joab and Abish'ai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim; where the people of Israel

were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.

And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abish'ai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

Then said Joab to Cu'shi, Go, tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cu'shi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran. Then said Ahim'aaz the son of Zadok, Let me, I pray thee, also run after Cu'shi. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahim'aaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cu'shi. And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof and looked, and behold a man running alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king: And the king said, If he be alone there is tidings in his mouth. And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. And the watchman said, Me-thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahim'aaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

And Ahim'aaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that

lifted up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahim'aaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

And the king said unto him, Turn aside and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still. And behold, Cu'shi came; and Cu'shi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto Cu'shi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cu'shi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

BRIEF REVIEW.

In what manner did Absalom win the hearts of the people?—What signal did he propose to give, that the people might know when a revolt should take place?—To what place did David go on hearing of the revolt?—Under whom did he send the people against Absalom?—What charge did he give Joab, Abish'ai, and Ittai?—What was the end of Absalom?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Here we see the event and end of Absalom's rebellion, and the punishment that God inflicted upon that unnatural and impious son, who intended to have deprived his father both of his life and kingdom. In this history we see evident marks of the curse of God upon Absalom, since he perished in a very tragical manner. This is a great example of the divine vengeance which overtakes the wicked, and especially ambitious men, disobedient children, and such as rebel against their lawful sovereigns. It must be considered further, that the divine vengeance overtook, not only Absalom, but the Israelites also: for there fell of them twenty thousand. Lastly, David's excessive grief when he heard of the death of Absalom, must be ascribed, not only to his tender affection for his unnatural and rebellious son, but also to his piety. He was more concerned for his sin, and the state in which he died, than for his death. The affection of a parent is very strong; the sins, the ingratitude of children, cannot root it from their heart; and they who fear God are then most inconsolable, when their children are engaged in a course of sin, and they see them die in a state of condemnation.

CHAP. LXVII.

The Death of David. From the second Chapter of the first Book of Kings.
A. M. 2990.—B. C. 1014.

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die : and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth : be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man : and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself ; That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart, and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee, said he, a man on the throne of Israel. So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years : seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father : and his kingdom was established greatly.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is desirable to be habitually and calmly expecting the approach of death : for that is the way appointed for all men to pass from this world to another : a dark and gloomy road indeed it is for the workers of iniquity, to a still more dark and dreadful place : but rendered cheerful to the righteous, by the presence of the Lord, and by the hopes of complete felicity.

We cannot too closely imitate the example of this most eminent saint : but let us watch and pray, lest we be overcome by temptation and overtaken with sin, to the dishonour of God, and the wounding of our own consciences ; and if we have offended, let us copy his example of repentance and patience, still hoping to close our days like him ; and having served our generation after the will of God, to fall asleep, with the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CHAP. LXVIII.

Solomon's wise choice. From the third Chapter of the first Book of Kings.
A. M. 2990.—B. C. 1014.

IN Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night : and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee ; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father : and I am but a little child : I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad : for who is able to judge this thy so great a people ?

And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life ; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies : but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment ; behold, I have done according to thy words : lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour : so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

And Solomon awoke ; and behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house ; and it came to pass that this woman's child died in the night ; and she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when

I arose in the morning, behold, it was dead : but when I had considered it in the morning, behold it was not my son, which I did bear. And the other woman said, Nay ; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No ; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead ; and the other saith, Nay ; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it : she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged ; and they feared the king : for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where and how did God appear to Solomon?—What did he ask of God?—Where did he go after awaking from his dream?—What did he do at Jerusalem?—What instance of his wisdom is recorded in the latter part of the chapter.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

God granted Solomon a peculiar favour, when he gave him the liberty to ask what he pleased : and Solomon gave an instance of his wisdom and piety, when he asked of God skill and understanding to enable him to govern the people, rather than glory and riches. This request was so agreeable to God, that he granted him an extraordinary degree of wisdom, and at the same time gave him riches and glory surpassing the greatest kings. We ought all of us to learn from hence to labour after, and beg of God in the first place, true wisdom, which consists in fearing him ; and the gifts and graces of the Spirit necessary to that end. The manner in which God received Solomon's prayer proves, that he is always ready to grant these gifts to those that ask them ; besides which, he often grants them temporal blessings, although they do not ask them. This our Lord teaches us in these words : "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." Lastly, it was soon discovered that Solomon was endued with an extraordinary degree of wisdom, by the judgment that he passed between the two women that came before him ; and these beginnings of his reign show how completely happy that prince would have been, if he had persevered in holiness, and in the fear of the Lord.

CHAP. LXIX.

Solomon's Agreement with Hiram, and Building of the Temple. From the fifth and sixth Chapters of the first Book of Kings. A. M. 2977.—B. C. 1014.

AND Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon ; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father : for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God, for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. And behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. Now therefore command thou, that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon ; and my servants shall be with thy servants : and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint : for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for : and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea : and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them : and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food to my household. So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil : thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him : and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon ; and they two made a league together.

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month

Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.

And the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying, Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments, to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel. So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who sent messengers to Solomon on his being anointed?—What word did Solomon send Hiram?—What did Hiram promise in building the temple?—What did Solomon give him in return?—How long after the children of Israel came out of Egypt was it when he began to build the temple?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As soon as Solomon was settled upon the throne, he began to build the temple at Jerusalem, agreeably to his father David's order, and the will of God himself. He built it in a most magnificent manner, employing to that end those immense riches God had given him; and spared nothing which might engage his subjects, and all the neighbouring nations, to reverence and respect the temple. These were marks of zeal which then animated and inspired him. God let him know, that what he had done was acceptable in his sight; and that if he and his people inviolably adhered to him, he would always be their protector and their God.

Mutual good offices between neighbours are very desirable and becoming. How beautiful and lovely it is to see these two princes ready to serve each other with the products of their respective countries! Thus should we act to those about us; be kind and friendly to them, ready to sell, or lend, or give, what we have, and which they want. This is the way to receive other favours in exchange, and to promote the peace and honour of society, and the comfort of one another.

CHAP. LXX.

Dedication of the Temple. From the eighth Chapter of the first Book of Kings.
A. M. 3000.—B. C. 1004.

Now was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the

Lord. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.

Then spake Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. And the Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless, thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name. And the Lord hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven: and he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day: that thine eyes may be open towards this house night and day, even towards the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house; then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to

thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house; then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them; then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands towards this house; then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

Moreover, concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; when he shall come and pray towards this house; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house which I have builded is called by thy name.

If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the Lord towards the city which thou hast chosen, and towards the house that I have built for thy name; then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not, and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee towards their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers,

the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause: And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Solomon bring into the temple?—Whom did he then assemble?—In what position was Solomon when he offered his prayer?—In what position was he when he blessed the people?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Solomon, with all his wealth and magnificence, never looked so truly great and glorious, as he did in the attitude in which this chapter

represents him. He was great on the throne, on the bench of justice, in his buildings, furniture, and equipage; but never so truly illustrious, as when prostrating himself before God, and leading the devotions of Israel. It was for his honour that he could pray, and suit his petitions to the occasion with so much propriety and affection. It was for his honour that he was willing to pray before this vast congregation, and did not turn over the work to an inferior person. The reverence of his posture, and the devotion of his heart, are worthy the imitation of the greatest men.

Solomon begged of God to hear all the supplications offered up to him in the temple by the Jews, in their several necessities, and even by strangers. From this prayer we learn, that all events proceed from God; that war, famine, pestilence, and other judgments, are inflicted by Providence, when men provoke God by their sins; that to have recourse to God by prayer, confession of sins, and true repentance, is the way to remedy these evils; and that God is always ready to hear and to deliver those who call upon him in their necessities, and with all their heart turn unto him.

CHAP. LXXI.

God's Covenant with Solomon. From the ninth Chapter of the first Book of Kings.
A. M. 3012.—B. C. 992.

AND it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, that the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments; then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people: And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be

astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The caution which God gave Solomon in this chapter reminds us that if we desire the continuance of our privileges, we must be an obedient and holy people. No establishment of the externals of religion, no splendor of the Church, or forms of worship, can secure the divine favor, and lengthen our tranquillity, without obedience to God's laws and keeping his commandments. Let us impress this truth upon our hearts, that we may not be high-minded, but fear; and let every particular person remember, that doing the will of God is necessary to the acceptance of our prayers, and the continuance of the divine blessing.

CHAP. LXXII.

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon. From the tenth Chapter of the first Book of Kings. A. M. 3012.—B. C. 992.

AND when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions; there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her.

And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and

that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

BRIEF REVIEW.

For what purpose did the queen of Sheba visit Solomon?—What did she say after she had seen all his riches?—What did she give him?—Where did she then go?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The experience of the queen had taught her how happy is that people whose rulers delight in wisdom and in virtue. She magnifies the God of Israel—she blesses Solomon—she congratulates his subjects. “Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel. Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.” But, O God, how hast thou loved thy chosen Israel, the Church, in setting over us that righteous branch of Jesse, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace? In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. Sing, O heaven, and rejoice, O earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have everlasting mercy upon his heritage.

CHAP. LXXIII.

Elijah raiseth the Widow's Son. From the seventeenth Chapter of the first Book of Kings. A. M. 3015.—B. C. 909.

AND the word of the Lord came unto Elijah, saying, Arise, get thee to Zar'ephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose, and went to Zar'ephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay me son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

BRIEF REVIEW.

To what place was Elijah directed to go?—Whom did he find at the gate of the city?—What did he direct her to do?—What miracle did he perform for her in lengthening out her provisions?—What other miracle did he perform for her?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We learn to be liberal, even of a little. If God has given us but little, let us be ready to do good to others, to let them share with us. Water

was at that time a scarce commodity; yet the poor widow, in her great necessity, was ready to relieve a stranger. Those who are in low circumstances have no excuse for being uncharitable. Let every one give of his little. Even a cup of cold water shall not lose its reward.

The consideration of this wonderful instance of God's care and concern for his distressed servants, should strongly influence and turn our hearts to regard him as the fountain of all goodness, who sees our necessities, and is able to supply them in all extremities. And it should convince us that it is our wisest and best policy to secure to ourselves the favour of such an omnipotent Benefactor, by rendering him the homage of our prayers, the confession of our lips, the obedience of our whole lives, against all the temptations of worldly fear or favour which can be offered to prevent us.

CHAP. LXXIV.

Translation of Elijah, and Elisha divideth Jordan. From the second Chapter of the second Book of Kings. A. M. 3108.—B. C. 896.

AND it came to pass, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. And the sons of the prophets said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

And the men of Jericho said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt

in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha, which he spake.

And he went up from thence unto Beth'el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head. And he turned back, and looked on them; and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What became of Elijah?—Who took his mantle?—What miracle did he perform upon Jordan?—What one did he perform in Jericho?—What took place as he was going up to Bethel?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The taking up of the prophet Elijah into heaven is a miraculous event, in which we see how God was pleased to reward the extraordinary zeal of this great prophet, and to teach men, at the same time, that he reserves in heaven a blessed state for those that shall have served him faithfully. Besides this we have, in the ascension of Elijah, a type of that of Jesus Christ, which is yet a stronger proof to us that there is a better life after this prepared for the righteous.

The death of the forty-two children of Bethel, who were devoured by two bears, was designed by God to confirm the calling of Elisha among an idolatrous people; to terrify the king of Israel and his people; and to punish the inhabitants of Bethel, the place where idolatry was publicly practised, and where the prophets of the Lord were despised and rejected.

It was expedient such examples as these should now and then be made, and that God should give proofs of his wrath, in a kingdom where the worship of idols was appointed and supported by public authority.

CHAP. LXXV.

Elisha preserveth the Widow's Oil, and raiseth to life the Shunamite's Son. From the fourth Chapter of the second Book of Kings. A. M. 3109.—B. C. 895.

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bond-men.

And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house save a pot of oil.

Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunamite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily, she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, thou shalt embrace a son.

And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new-moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well. Then she said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.

So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunamite:

run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? and she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet; but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not: and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child: but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunamite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What miracle did Elisha perform for a poor widow?—To what place did he then go?—Who was his servant at this time?—By what name was the woman called with whom he ate and drank at Shunem?—What miracle did he perform upon her son?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

God, after he had given a son to the Shunamite, was pleased he should die, that he might restore him to her again by a miracle. The proceeding of this woman, who, as soon as her son was dead, went immediately to seek for Elisha, shows her surprising faith, and her hope that the same

prophet who had promised the birth of the child, would restore him to life; and she was not disappointed of her hope. God often afflicts his children in the most sensible manner, that he may afterward give them stronger tokens of his love by delivering them and giving them a happy issue out of their afflictions, and making them serve to confirm them in the faith and in the fear of the Lord.

CHAP. LXXVI.

Na'aman cured of Leprosy, and Gehazi smitten. From the fifth Chapter of the second Book of Kings. A. M. 3110.—B. C. 894.

Now, Na'aman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Na'aman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Na'aman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Na'aman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean.

But Na'aman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I

thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Ab'ana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.



NAAMAN BEFORE ELISHA.

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. But he said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Na'aman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So Gehazi followed

after Na'aman. And when Na'aman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Na'aman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants: and they bare them before him.

And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master; and Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? and he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Na'aman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was Na'aman?—Who informed him of the prophet Elisha?—To whom did the king of Syria send him?—What induced Elisha to send to the king of Israel?—What did Elisha direct Na'aman to do?—Who induced Na'aman to comply with the direction?—How came Gehazi to be smitten with the leprosy?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should apply the example of Na'aman to ourselves; we should be cautious how we despise the ordinances enjoined upon us because they are common, easy and plain; and should rather persuade ourselves, that the plainness and easiness of these ordinances should be a great inducement to us to join in them, and to try what benefit we can derive from them.

How can these waters of Jordan cleanse my leprosy? said Na'aman. How can the water of baptism, and the bread and wine in the other sacraments, the Christian is too apt to ask, produce those great effects for which they are instituted? The answer is, by virtue of this very institution, because our great Prophet, the divine Author of our religion, has blessed them, and appointed them to be the means of salvation. If he had enjoined us to perform much harder services for the attainment of his promises, common prudence would have told us it was our best way to

obey him. But now, that he has made these small and easy observances the conditions of our happiness, how much more readily should we hearken to him, how much more punctually perform what is commanded!

CHAP. LXXVII.

Hezekiah's Sickness. From the twentieth Chapter of the second Book of Kings.
A. M. 3291.—B. C. 713.

IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Isaiah say to Hezekiah?—What did Hezekiah do?—What did Isaiah then say to him?—What sign was given to satisfy Hezekiah that he would recover?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Secret, earnest prayer is the approved and never failing method of obtaining relief and comfort in seasons of the deepest distress; and, sometimes, the Lord immediately turns the mourning of the humble supplicant into joy and thanksgiving. He always hears the prayers and seeks the tears of the broken in heart, and will give health, length of days, and temporal deliverances, as much, and as long as they are truly beneficial.

CHAP. LXXVIII.

David's Hymn of Thanksgiving. From the sixteenth Chapter of the first Book of Chronicles. This Hymn is entirely made up of parts of three Psalms which occur in the Book of Psalms—Namely, CV, XCVI, and CVI.

GIVE thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth, O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; when ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.

And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm. Sing unto the Lord, all the earth: show forth from day to day his salvation. Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place. Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring

an offering, and come before him : worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Fear before him, all the earth : the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice : and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof : let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.

Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth. O give thanks unto the Lord : for he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a good and pleasant thing to be thankful, and we should carefully record and frequently review the Lord's mercies to us and to his Church, that we may be excited to abound in joyful praises ; and ministers are especially appointed by the Son of David our King, to animate and assist the people thus to glorify and rejoice in God, by preaching to them the gospel of salvation, and by every other means in their power. The streams of mercy we partake of should be traced back to that fountain of love whence they are derived ; and in thanking the Lord for his benefits to us, we should celebrate the glorious excellences of his nature. This will also encourage our own faith and hope, and excite the attention of others to observe and admire his marvellous works ; and therefore we should be unreserved and open, in singing and speaking forth the praises of our God.

CHAP. LXXIX.

David's Preparation for the Temple. From the twenty-second Chapter of the first Book of Chronicles. A. M. 2987.—B. C. 1017. For the Building of the Temple, see Chapter LXIX.

THEN David said, This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel. And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel ; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails, for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings ; and brass in abundance without weight ; also cedar trees in abundance : for

the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the Lord God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God: but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee. only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel; be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. Now behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight, for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. Moreover, there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. - Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, Is not the Lord your God with you? and hath he not given you rest on every side? for he hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the Lord, and before his people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise, therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of

the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did David do before his death?—What did he then command his son Solomon?—On what did he tell Solomon his prosperity would depend?—What did David command the princes to do?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

King David gave noble proofs of his piety towards the end of his reign. But not content with serving God by calling upon him, and giving thanks for his mercies in his own life, he was desirous they should build a temple to his honour; and consecrated all the riches and materials he could get together, for the execution of his pious designs. But David's zeal and religion is discovered particularly in his exhortations to his son Solomon, charging him to fear God, to keep his commandments, and to govern his people righteously, assuring him that this would be the foundation of all his happiness. All Christians, and in particular those who are in authority, or who have riches, ought to have at heart the support of religion, and the service of God. Parents especially should recommend to their children piety, and the keeping God's commandments, as the whole happiness of their families. There is a particular reflection to be made on God's not approving David's building the temple at Jerusalem, because he had been a man of war, and had shed much blood, and therefore God was pleased this design should be rather executed by his son Solomon. From whence we may conclude, that God, who is a God of peace, does not delight in blood; that, if any wars are just and necessary, they are a great evil, and that by peace and tranquillity, rather than by confusion and trouble, his kingdom is promoted and advanced.

CHAP. LXXX.

Ezra mourneth, and prayeth to God. From the ninth Chapter of Ezra.
A. M. 3547.—B. C. 457.

AND at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God. And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil,

and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we were bond-men; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations; wouldest not thou be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The prayer which Ezra made on this occasion is very instructive. He herein acknowledges with profound humility, that the sins of the Jews had obliged the Lord to chastise them, and had reduced them to the servile condition in which they were. This shows that in the evils which we suffer we should always give glory to God, and acknowledge the righteousness of his judgments. And as Ezra, after he had confessed the sins of the Jews, promised they should no more break the law of God, we must acknowledge that the method of obtaining God's grace and the remission of our past sins, is to forsake those sins, by a speedy and sincere conversion, and to take care not to fall into them again.

CHAP. LXXXI.

Nehemiah mourneth and fasteth, and his Prayer. From the first Chapter of Nehemiah.
A. M. 3558.—B. C. 446.

THE words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass that Han'ani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them into the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cup-bearer.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Whose son was Nehemiah?—Who came to him?—What did he ask them?—What was their reply?—What did he do on learning the distress of his brethren at Jerusalem?—What officer was he to the king?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have in this chapter marks of the most ardent piety in Nehemiah. This appears in his grief, to hear the deplorable state the city of Jerusalem and all the Jews were in, and in that excellent and fervent prayer which he made to implore the mercy of God on their behalf, to obtain pardon for their sins, and their complete restoration. All those who fear God, and especially those who are in an exalted station, should, like Nehemiah, be more concerned for the Church of God than for any other thing; should sympathise in the evils that befall it, pray continually for it, and labour as much as possible to promote its happiness and prosperity.

CHAP. LXXXII.

The reading and hearing the Law. From the eighth Chapter of Nehemiah.
A. M. 3559.—B. C. 445.

AND all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water-gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water-gate from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and opened the book in the sight of all the people; for he was above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up: And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

And Nehemiah, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the

Lord is your strength. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where were the people gathered together?—What did they request of Ezra?—What did the people say, when the law was read?—What effect did it produce on them?—What did Ezra say when he saw them weep?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is impossible for any person to read this chapter concerning the bringing out the book of the law, and reading it in the ears of all the people, without being greatly moved and affected by it, as it shows us the religious affection and regard which the Jews had for the Holy Scriptures. The devout manner of reading it, and the religious attention, and becoming reverence with which it was heard, are excellently described; but the most affecting circumstance of all is that which follows, that, "All the people wept, when they heard the words of the law." Happy, indeed, would it be, if the christian world had the same pious regard for the book of God; that they would be often mindful to take it up, and read therein with all devout attention, and lay up the words thereof in their hearts and in their souls! And may we not only lay up the word of God in our memories, but labour to bring forth the happy fruits thereof in our lives and conversation; that so, that sacred Book, which was given to make us wise unto salvation, may never rise up against us, and condemn us at the last day.

CHAP. LXXXIII.

A solemn Fast appointed, and Repentance of the People. From the ninth Chapter of Nehemiah. A. M. 3559.—B. C. 445.

Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. And stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God.

Then stood up the Levites and said, Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of

heaven worshippeth thee. Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous: And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red Sea. And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.

Moreover, thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments; and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hast sworn to give them.

But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments; and refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them: But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldst not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing: their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

Moreover, thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners. Their children also multipliedst thou

as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

Nevertheless, they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them; and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.

But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leavest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven: and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies; and testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them; and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. Nevertheless, for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly: Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies,

wherewith thou didst testify against them. For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What is chiefly to be observed in this prayer is—The Jews adore the power and majesty of the most high God; solemnly acknowledge the mercies their nation had received from him in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, and his forbearance and long suffering towards them; they confess their sins and rebellions, and their abuse of his favours; they own too that God had justly chastised them, by sending them into captivity, and subjecting them to strange princes. They then enter into a solemn engagement never more to return to their old sins, but to keep inviolably the covenant which they then renewed with the Lord. We should make a useful application to ourselves of all the parts of this excellent prayer; we should frequently read it, and learn from it to praise and adore God, to acknowledge the favours he bestows upon us in general, and upon every one in particular: they especially, whose circumstances somewhat resemble those of the Jews at that time, and who have been made to pass through divers trials and afflictions, ought, from hence, to learn to confess their sins and ingratitude, to celebrate his forbearances, to be more faithful to him for time to come, and religiously to perform the conditions of his covenant.

CHAP. LXXXIV.

Haman and Mordecai. From the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh Chapters of Esther. A. M. 3494.—B. C. 510.

AND Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom: and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the Jews' enemy. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee. Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province; and the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women in one day; and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's gate; for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house; and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre.

Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. And when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the

king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself: yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman: and he caused the gallows to be made.

On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of two of the king's chamberlains who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him. And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head. And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. Then took Haman the apparel, and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered. And the king said again to Esther on the second day at the ban-

quet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain and to perish. But if we had been sold for bond-men and bond-women, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And one of the chamberlains said before the king, Behold also the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

BRIEF REVIEW

Who induced king Ahasuerus to issue a decree to destroy the Jews? —Who came before the king's gate and lamented the miseries of the Jews?—Who was queen to the king?—Of what nation was she? —Who persuaded Haman to build a gallows for Mordecai?—How came the favourable attention of the king to be turned towards Mordecai?—What became of Haman?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When iniquitous enterprises, managed by subtilty or violence, are suddenly and seasonably defeated, then the ever-vigilant Eye, and the all-powerful Hand are concerned. God doth ever see the deceitful workers of iniquity, though they devise their wickedness in secret. He often doth suffer it to go on to a pitch of maturity, till it be thoroughly formed, till it be ready to break forth in fearful effects; then, in a moment, he crusheth it to nothing. God beholdeth unjust men setting out on their designs; he lets them proceed in full career till they reach the object of their wishes; then, instantly, he checketh, he turned them back, he overthroweth them. Thus was Haman's plot confounded, when he had procured a royal decree, when he had fixed a time, when he had issued forth letters for the destruction of the people of God. Almighty God could prevent the beginning of wicked designs, or could subvert them in any state of their progress; but he rather winketh, for a time, at their success, and suffereth the designers to go on, till they are elevated to the height of confidence, and till the good are on the brink of ruin: then, surprisingly,

he striketh in with effectual succour; thus declaring how vain is the presumption of the ungodly, how needful and how certain is his protection over his good and faithful servants; how much reason the one hath to dread him, and the other to confide in him.

CHAP. LXXXV.

Job's Character, Trials and Patience. From the first and second Chapters of Job, About A. M. 2484.—B. C. 1520.

THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned

up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword: and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where did Job live?—What was his character?—What trials had he?—What did he say when told of the death of his sons and daughters?—What did his wife say to him when he was smitten with boils?—What was his reply?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Job remembered the several prosperous years which had passed over his head, and he knew by whose providence they had been prosperous.

Surely there was a debt of gratitude owing on this account, which it became him, as far as possible, to answer. This he considered thoroughly; and therefore, instead of any impatient murmuring at his present sufferings, he resigned himself up entirely to God, and blessed the hand under which it suffered. If the example of this great man, who is so highly celebrated in Holy Writ, be of any moment, it may be applied, in some measure, to every other person who labours under affliction. For though it may not be frequent to be so highly favoured by providence, as this great man had been in his more early years; yet, who is there that hath enjoyed nothing, and received no advantages from the influence of Heaven?

CHAP. LXXXVI.

God's universal and wise Providence. From the fifth Chapter of Job.

ALTHOUGH affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground: yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number: who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noonday as in the night. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty. So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for he maketh sore and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin. Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt

come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should consider our afflictions as so many kind warnings to examine ourselves, confess our sins, seek mercy from God, and walk more diligently in his ways: we should humble ourselves before him, and neither despise his rod, nor seek help or relief from any other quarter. He alone can effectually remove temporal afflictions, and give peace to the wounded conscience, or relief to the troubled spirit. And when we have found pardon of sin, peace with God, and deliverance from the power of sin, we may without reserve venture our all in his hands. He will provide for our real wants, and protect us in the way of duty, so that no evil can hurt us, and deliver us from all the troubles with which he may please to prove us. We may go out and come in, lie down and rise up, without distrustful fear, assured of the special care of Heaven, till the Lord see good to call us home. We are not authorized to expect great wealth, long life, flourishing families, or exemption from tribulations: but we are assured that all will be ordered in the best manner possible, and that we shall not be summoned by death till we are ripe for glory, and have lived as long as it is good for us in the world. This has been the confidence, observation, and experience of godly men in all ages; may we hear it and know it for our good.

CHAP. LXXXVII.

God's Almighty Power and Justice. From the ninth and eleventh Chapters of the Book of Job.

Job said, How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou? If I speak of strength,

lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey. If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself—I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.



JOB AND HIS FRIENDS.

Then answered Zophar and said, Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it? If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot: yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear: Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that

pass away : And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday : thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope ; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid ; yea, many shall make suit unto thee. But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Job here teaches us, that man cannot be justified before God : that if the Lord should enter into judgment with him, he could not " answer him one of a thousand," and that sinful men, however treated, have no right to complain, but must all be condemned in God's presence, and implore his mercy. What Job here says, shows, that though he insisted he was not a wicked man, he did not pretend to be just before God. We ought all to entertain the same thoughts : continually and seriously to reflect upon these truths ; and thereby animate ourselves to the fear of God, submitting to his will, and putting our trust in him.

CHAP. LXXXVIII.

Life, Death, and the Resurrection. From the fourteenth and nineteenth Chapters of Job.

MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down : he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass ; turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground ; yet, through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away : yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down, and riseth not : till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

If a man die, shall he live again ? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee : thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. For now thou numberest my steps : dost thou not watch over my

sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity. And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance and sendest him away. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach; know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? O that my words were now written! O that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever! for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Job, in this chapter, presents us with a lively representation of the frailty of human life, of the miseries to which man is subject in this world, and of the condition to which he is reduced by death. Whilst our experience teaches us that the representation is correct, we ought to praise God that we have in the Gospel, and in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection, strong consolation, and an unailing remedy against the vanity of this life, and against death himself. Meanwhile our great care should be, to improve the time and other talents with which God hath intrusted us; that so we may be enabled, by his mercy in Christ Jesus, to support our present sufferings with patience, and be secured in the possession of unmingled and never-fading happiness in the life to come.

CHAP. LXXXIX.

The State and Portion of the Wicked. From the twentieth and twenty-first Chapters of Job.

THEN answered Zophar, Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet he shall perish for ever, they which have seen him shall say, Where is he? He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found, yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him. His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods. His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue: though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his meat is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again. He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper's tongue shall slay him. He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter. That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down; according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.

Because he hath oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not; surely he shall not feel quietness, he shall not save of that which he desired. There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods. In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him. God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him, while he is eating. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through. It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him. All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle. The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him. The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath. This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

Then answered Job and said, Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him? Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? and how oft cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens, That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done? Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though the wicked often prosper even to the end of life; yet it is a decided matter amongst all wise men from the beginning hitherto, that "the triumphing of the wicked," and "the joy of the hypocrite," are transient and fleeting; and that they shall shortly perish disgracefully and for ever. In general, iniquity ruins men's constitutions; and if they are not cut off before, it entails pain and disease on their old age, which carries them down to the grave; the pleasures and gains of sin, like drinking sweet poison, or like the lulling venom of the asp, terminate in remorse, in anguish, and in ruin. A curse from God often corrodes the oppressor's abundance; he hath no enjoyment of it, and suffers none of those connected with him to have any ease or pleasure; and very often it is torn from them in an awful and sudden manner. "There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked."

CHAP. XC.

Wisdom, the Gift of God. From the twenty-eighth Chapter of the Book of Job.

SURELY there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone. He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death. The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; even the waters forgotten of the foot; they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

As for the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of sapphires: and it hath dust of gold. There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. He putteth forth his hand upon the rock: he overturneth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing. He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.

But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The chapter begins with a fine description of the indefatigable industry and ardour of mankind in searching after other things, which contribute either to the uses or the ornaments of life—how they dig into the bowels of the earth for metals, gold, silver, iron, and brass. And though the great Creator hath placed a boundary betwixt light and darkness, yet the industry or avarice of man is without bounds. He searcheth into the land of darkness itself for hid treasures. But wouldst thou be truly wise? be wise for thyself, wise for thy soul, wise for eternity. Resolve upon a religious course of life. “Fear God and depart from evil.” Look beyond things present and sensible unto things which are not seen and are eternal; labour to secure the great interests of another world, and refer all the actions of this short and dying life to that state which will shortly begin, but will never have an end; and this will approve itself to be wisdom at the last, whatever the world judge of it now. For not that which is approved of men now, but what shall finally be approved by God, is true wisdom; that which is esteemed so by him who is the fountain and original of all wisdom, the first rule and measure, the best and most competent judge of it.

 CHAP. XCI.

Job's former Prosperity. From the twenty-ninth Chapter of the Book of Job.

O THAT I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness: As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle: when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; when I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father

to the poor : and the cause which I knew not, I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again ; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain ; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain. If I laughed on them, they believed it not ; and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst Job was in prosperity, he was respected by all ; but as soon as he fell into adversity, every one forsook him. Thus it happens every day : men make their court to those who have riches, and honours, and credit in the world ; but abandon them as soon as they are deprived of these advantages. The opinions of men are extremely vain and unreasonable : we ought not, therefore, to make any great account of them, nor build our happiness upon them.

When amidst the greatest prosperity and honour, let us expect changes, and especially think of death. Men are ready to be confident of the continuance of their wealth and enjoyments ; perhaps Job was so. Let us learn from the sad change in his circumstances, and many such changes within our own knowledge, not to be high-minded, but fear. He thought of death ; his prosperity did not make him forget that. Let us daily think of it, and prepare for it, and then, whether we have praise of men or not, we shall certainly have praise of God, and be applauded before the assembled world at the last day.

CHAP. XCII.

Job recounteth his Acts of Obedience. From the thirty-first Chapter of Job.

IF I walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit, let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands ; then let me sow, and let another eat ; yea, let my offspring be rooted out. If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my

maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer? Did not he that made me make him? and did not one fashion us? If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate; then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure. If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied. The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller. If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom; did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door? Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me. I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince, would I go near unto him. If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Genuine religion teaches us to treat inferiors and domestics with humanity, equity and affection; to bear with their faults, to sympathise in their troubles, to hearken to their complaints, and to seek their present and future welfare: remembering that they are our brethren, as near to the great Creator, and as capable of eternal salvation as ourselves. It

disposes us likewise to kindness as well as justice towards the poor—to consult their inclination, to share our comforts with them, whether we have abundance, or only moderate provision; and to seek an interest in the grateful prayers of the fatherless and the widow, by sparing from our indulgence, to feed, clothe, educate, or protect them.

CHAP. XCIII.

God omnipotent and just, and high above Man. From the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth Chapters of Job.

FURTHERMORE Elihu answered and said, Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge. For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat. Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good. Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world? If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words. Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just? Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the person of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? For they all are the work of his hands. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away; and the mighty shall be taken away without hand. For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead. Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways; so that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him,

and he heareth the cry of the afflicted. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only: that the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man. Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As a reason why we should never complain of the proceedings of the Almighty when he corrects us, nor pretend to be righteous before him, Elihu insisteth upon the wisdom and justice of the Almighty; and the nothingness of man before him. He teaches that men, who are as nothing before him, ought not to call him to an account for any of his dealings; that he examines and knows the behaviour of every man; that as he is judge of the world, he will render to men according to their works; and that whether he punishes, or does us good, none can hinder him.

We are also here taught a doctrine of very great importance; which is, that our righteousness may profit other men, as our sins may do them harm: but that God receives no advantage from the good we do, nor any injury from the sins we commit. It follows from hence, that God, in all his dealings with us, and particularly when he afflicts us, has our good alone in view. If he punishes us, he does it not only with justice, but with goodness too; and therefore, instead of charging God foolishly, as if he treated us with too great severity, we ought readily to acquiesce in all the dispensations of his wise and good providence.

CHAP. XCIV.

Elihu showeth God's Power and Glory. From the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh Chapters of Job.

SUFFER me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom. He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted. And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction, then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression. Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength. Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction. Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him? who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity? Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold. Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.

Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out. For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof: which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly. Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle? Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea. For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance. With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt. The noise thereof showeth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.

Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth:

he thundereth with the voice of his excellency : and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth ; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength. He sealet up the hand of every man ; that all men may know his work. Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind : and cold out of the north.

By the breath of God frost is given : and the breadth of the waters is straitened. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud : he scattereth his bright cloud : and it is turned round about by his counsels : that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. Hearken unto this, O Job : stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine ? Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge ? How thy garments are warm when he quieteth the earth by the south wind ? Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass ? Teach us what we shall say unto him : for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness. And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds : but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them. Fair weather cometh out of the north : with God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out : he is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice ; he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him : he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

High and honourable thoughts of God tend to promote submission to his will. Let us consider him as a Being of infinite perfections, of boundless power and knowledge, supreme authority, unrivalled and everlasting dominion. We see his works of nature, and they are without fault and defect ; especially his agency in the blessings of sunshine and rain ; they are plain to our eyes, though the method of the operation of natural causes is mysterious and incomprehensible. Let us not dare to teach him or prescribe to him. The more careful we are to contemplate his nature, and to magnify his works which we behold, the more shall we be afraid and ashamed of censuring his providence.

CHAP. XCV.

God's Wonderful Works in Creation and Providence. From the thirty-eighth Chapter of Job.

THEN the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, when I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days: and caused the day-spring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depth? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee; or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, that thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof? Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great? Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Plei'ades, or loose the

bands of Ori'on: Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven, when the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together? Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The revolutions of day and night, and of the seasons of the year, with all that profusion of bounty with which they are crowned, and of which his enemies richly partake, should encourage us to expect large blessings from his covenant-love in Jesus Christ, and to be followers of him in love to our enemies. The constancy and exactness, with which natural effects are produced, should remind us of the faithfulness of the Lord's promises, and the immutability of his counsel; and excite us to be constant and exact in our course of daily worship and obedience. The consideration of his all-sufficiency and eternity should teach us to choose his favour as our portion and blessedness for ever; and every view that we take of his manifested perfections, is suited to convince us of his right to our love and obedience, of the evils of sinning against him, and of our need of his mercy and salvation. The humiliating recollection of our comparative insignificance should check our pride and presumption, and lay us low in reverential fear and self-abasement. It would be in vain for us to command the clouds to rain, or to attempt to stay these bottles of heaven: but if we call upon the Lord in our necessities or fears, he will regulate all these things for our good. In fine, the more we contemplate, the more we are confounded with the vastness and the variety of these discoveries of our God. All his ways are in wisdom; and every thing will concur to ruin his obstinate enemies: but all things work together for good to them that love him.

CHAP. XCVI.

The animal Creation. From the thirty-ninth, fortieth, and forty-first Chapters of Job.

WHO hath sent out the wild beast free? or who hath loosed his bands? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren

land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing. Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding. What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings towards the south? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? she dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

Behold now be'hemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones

are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God : he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow ; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not : he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes : his nose pierceth through snares.

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook ? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down ? Canst thou put an hook into his nose ? or bore his jaw through with a thorn ? Will he make many supplications unto thee ? will he speak soft words unto thee ? will he make a covenant with thee ? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever ? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird ? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens ? Shall the companions make a banquet of him ? shall they part him among the merchants ? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons ? or his head with fish-spears.

None is so fierce that dare stir him up : who then is able to stand before me ? Who hath prevented me that I should repay him ? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. They are joined one to another, they stick together that they cannot be sundered. By his neezings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him. The flakes of his flesh are joined together : they are firm in themselves ; they cannot be moved. His heart is as firm as a stone ; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid : the sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold : he esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee : darts are counted as stubble : he laugheth at the shaking of a spear. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot : he maketh a path to shine after him ; one would think the deep to be hoary. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things ; he is a king over all the children of pride.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of God, are legible in all the variety of his creatures : "He openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of

every living thing," and he watches over them all with constant attention. Such as have no help from man, are taken care of, as well as those that have: and in like manner his people will surely be provided for and protected, either by or without the instrumentality of their fellow-creatures. Every species of animals reminds us of our ignorance and impotence: they continue as God hath created them, and we can neither understand whence their different propensities arise, nor yet alter them: we often can derive no benefit from them; nay, they seem a nuisance to us, nor can we know for what purpose they were created. Yet we should acknowledge the wisdom of God, and submit to his will: we ought to be thankful for the benefit derived from some, and to be patient under the inconveniences occasioned by others; and we may learn from them to confide in his kind providence.

CHAP. XCVII.

The Kingdom of Christ. From the second, forty-fifth, and forty-sixth Psalms.

WHY do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth

and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be



ROYAL PSALMIST.

brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams

whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The three psalms from which this chapter is selected, although written on different occasions, and to celebrate some interesting events connected with the life of David, have reference to the Messiah, and the unfailing glory of his kingdom. From the language here used, and from the declarations of Scripture generally, we are authorized to believe, that while the heathen rage, and the dominions of this world crumble into dust and pass away, the throne of Immanuel shall be for ever, and he will bestow on his friends an everlasting inheritance.

In the Redeemer, the enlightened soul perceives unutterable goodness and beauty, which eclipse all the dim excellences that it was wont to admire in the children of men. The gracious words which he speaks to sinners, are replete with divine harmony, and excite ineffable comfort in the broken heart; and Christ himself rejoices in his exaltation, and the power and glory which the Father hath conferred on him; because he delights in bestowing on his people the blessing which he purchased for them on the cross.

Next to the Redeemer's excellences, those of his espoused Church are most worthy to be celebrated: not for what she was in herself; but for what he hath made her, in consequence of his love and choice. If we desire to share these blessings, we must hearken to his word, consider his proposals, and incline our ears and our hearts to ask an union with him: we must renounce and even forget our carnal and sinful attachments, pursuits, and connexions, if we would be pleasing in his eyes, or be admitted into this honourable relation.

CHAP. XCVIII.

The Security and Happiness of the Righteous. From the first, fifteenth, and ninety-first Psalms.

BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat

of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? he that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The psalm placed first in this chapter, like the sermon on the mount, opens with a "beatitude" for our comfort and encouragement, directing us immediately to that happiness, after which all mankind in different ways are seeking. He who hath once brought himself to delight in the Scriptures, will find no temptation to exchange that pleasure for any that the world or the flesh can offer him. Such an one will make the oracles of God his companions by day and by night. He will have recourse to them for direction in the bright and cheerful hours of prosperity; to them he will apply for comfort in the dark and dreary seasons of adversity. And, by continual meditation in the Sacred Writings, he will as naturally improve and advance in holiness, as a tree thrives and flourishes in a kindly and well-watered soil.

How much man stands in need of the protection of Heaven, appears from a survey of the dangers to which he is continually exposed. Various are the terrors of the night, manifold the perils of the day; from diseases, whose infection makes its progress unobserved; from assaults, casualties, and accidents, which can neither be foreseen, nor guarded against.

The soul has likewise her enemies ready to attack and surprise her at all hours. Avarice and ambition are abroad watching for her in the day; while concupiscence, like a pestilence, "walketh in darkness." In adversity she is disturbed by terrors; in prosperity, still more endangered by pleasures. But Jesus Christ has overcome the world, to prevent us from being overcome by it.

 CHAP. XCIX.

David's Thanksgiving for his extraordinary Deliverances and singular Prosperity.
From the eighteenth Psalm.

I WILL love thee, O Lord my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before

him his thick clouds passed, hailstones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice : hailstones and coals of fire.

Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me : for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity : but the Lord was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place ; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness : according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight. With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful ; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright ; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure ; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. For thou wilt save the afflicted people ; but wilt bring down high looks. For thou wilt light my candle : the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

As for God, his way is perfect : the word of the Lord is tried : he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. For who is God save the Lord ? or who is a rock save our God ? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation : and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. For thou hast girded me with strength unto battle : thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. They cried, but there was none to save them : even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.

Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people ; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen : a people whom I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they

shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places. The Lord liveth: and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: Thou hast delivered me from the violent man. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name. Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

From the first words of this hymn we learn, that the divine favours and deliverances should inspire us with the most tender and sincere affection, and lead us to praise God continually. David's account of the extreme dangers he has been exposed to, and the wonderful power of God displayed in his deliverance, show, that into whatever extremities we fall, we should never despair of God's assistance, if we fear him—that his power is greater than man's, and that he never wants means to deliver those who hope in him. Lastly, David's zeal, expressed in the latter verses of this psalm, proves that it is not sufficient to praise God in private for his mercies, but we ought to proclaim his praises and loving kindness to the utmost of our power, that his holy name may be glorified by us, and by all men.

CHAP. C.

Perfection of God's Works and Word, and his Dominion over the Earth. From the nineteenth and twenty-fourth Psalms.

THE heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is

clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? the Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates: even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

King David here mentions two principal means by which God has made himself known unto us; which are, the works of nature, and his word. Let us therefore make a good use of both these means; meditating upon the marvellous works of God which afford us such proofs of his power and wisdom; but particularly let us apply ourselves to the reading and meditating on his word. David's high encomiums on God's word inform us, that it is a sure, evident, and unerring rule of faith and practice, that it is of infinitely more value than the most excellent things of this world; that it was given to enlighten and sanctify us, to rejoice and comfort the heart; that the fear of the Lord procures perfect happiness to those who are possessed with it, and that there is great reward in the keeping of his holy commandments.

CHAP. CI.

Conscious Integrity and Confidence in God's Favour. From the twenty-third, twenty-sixth, and twenty-seventh Psalms.

THE Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked. I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord: that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: in whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me. My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the Lord.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock. Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice : have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me ; put not thy servant away in anger ; thou hast been my help ; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies : for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord : be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart : wait, I say, on the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The happy condition of the faithful, who live in full assurance of God's love, and under his protection, is here in a most affecting manner set before us. David shows by his own example that they never want, that God protects, comforts, and supports them in every condition ; that he is with them even in death, and confers his graces and favours upon them in the highest degree, causing them to live in a blessed communion with him. The first Psalm in this chapter is full of consolation to true believers ; and the desire of partaking in the precious advantages therein set forth, should make us all zealously to apply ourselves to the study of piety.

Let us delight in public worship, from the same principle that David did ; and make it our earnest desire that we may not be deprived of the privileges and comforts of God's house. We live under a more excellent dispensation ; have a brighter display of the beauty of the Lord, see it reflected from the face of Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God, and in the scheme of our redemption by him. In gospel ordinances we enjoy his presence, and are instructed in his will. This is a great satisfaction to a pious mind, and the want of it is the chief lamentation of a good man. May we value and improve this privilege while we enjoy it ; and cheerfully and steadily obey the will of God, as well as diligently inquire after it.

CHAP. CII.

The Vanity of Life, and Man's Mortality. From the thirty-ninth and ninetieth Psalms.

I SAID, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue : I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good ; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me ;

while I was musing the fire burned ; then spake I with my tongue, Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is ; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth ; and mine age is as nothing before thee : verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain show. Surely they are disquieted in vain : he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

And now, Lord, what wait I for ? my hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions : make me not the reproach of the foolish. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. Remove thy stroke away from me : I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth : surely every man is vanity. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry ; hold not thy peace at my tears : for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction ; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood ; they are as a sleep ; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

The days of our years are threescore years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. O satisfy us early with thy mercy ; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us : yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it.

We need not inquire the precise time we have to live ; it will answer every good purpose attentively to consider the shortness and uncertainty of life. Our days are but an hand-breadth, or as nothing before God, and in comparison of his eternity : and in our greatest prosperity, and in the vigour of youth and health, verily every man is altogether vanity. He cannot live long : he may die soon and suddenly. His acquisitions are a shadow ; he is disquieted in vain : and if he succeed in heaping up riches, he must shortly leave them, not knowing who shall gather them. How absurd then are the perplexing anxieties and the incessant fatigues of the most successful worlding, who pursues such shadows to the marring of his present comforts, and the ruin of his immortal soul !

The impetuous current of time hurries mortals, as in a sleep, into eternity, where most of them first awake, and lift up their eyes ; and all the external splendour and gaiety which excite the envy, the desires, or the admiration of the thoughtless beholder, are destroyed and withered as in a moment. So that the supposed pleasure of a worldly life passes as a "tale that is told," and generally, taken all together, it proves a doleful tale. Few in comparison reach the seventy years assigned as the date of man's present life, and if a small number linger out a longer space, their lives are but a continuation of labour and sorrow, and soon they are cut off and fly away.

CHAP. CIII.

Faith and Patience. From the thirty-seventh Psalm.

FRET not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord ; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him : fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath : fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evil doers shall be cut off : but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be ; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth : and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of

many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken : but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright : and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time : and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall consume away.

The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again : but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth. For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth : and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord : and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down : for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and am now old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good ; and dwell for evermore. For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints ; they are preserved for ever : but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree : yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not : yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright : for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together ; the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord ; he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them : he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Even in this world it is evident that the afflicted righteous man is far happier than the most prosperous of the wicked. Let sinners then be counselled to depart from evil, and to do good ; to repent and forsake sin, to trust in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ ; and take his yoke upon them, and learn of him, that they may dwell for evermore in heaven. Let us all watch against impatience, envy, and despondency, and look more to the wretched end, than to the present state of wicked men ; committing all we are, and have, and do, to the Lord's disposal, and he will order that which is best for us. Let us cease from wrath and contention, which are sure inlets to evil doing : and wait for, and on the Lord, and keep his way without wearying or turning aside : let us endeavour to give energy to edifying conversation, by holy living : let us mark the closing scenes of different characters, and thus keeping our eyes fixed on eternal things, and our dependence on God's mercy, we may pass safely and comfortably through this dangerous and miserable life ; meet death with composure, and have "an entrance ministered to us

abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

CHAP. CIV.

Zeal for the Public Worship of God. From the forty-second, forty-third, and one hundred and twenty-second Psalms. The two first of these Psalms are supposed to have been composed by David, when he was driven by Absalom from Jerusalem. A. M. 2981.—B. C. 1023. The last was written about twenty years earlier, for the use of the Israelites, when they went up to Jerusalem to celebrate their sacred Feasts.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God—for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If it be great and honourable to be near the person and round the throne of an earthly king, how truly glorious are they whom the King of heaven delighteth to honour!—The mind never makes nobler exertions, is never so conscious of its native grandeur and ancient dignity, as when holding high converse with its Creator. The heart never feels such unspeakable peace, as when it is fixed upon him who made it, as when its affections go out on the supreme beauty, as when it rests upon the Rock of Ages, and is held within the circle of the everlasting arms.—It is some consolation, it is some relief, to open our hearts to men, and tell our sorrows to a friend who can give us no relief, but by mingling his tears with ours. What consolation, what relief will it then give to open our hearts and tell our sorrows to that Friend above, who is ever gracious to hear, and mighty to save! to that Friend who never fails; who is afflicted in all our afflictions, and who keeps us as the apple of his eye! Art thou, therefore, oppressed with the calamities of life? Is thy head bowed down with affliction, or thy heart broken with sorrow? approach to the altar, go to God, present to him the prayer of thy heart, and he will send thee help from his holy hill. By approaching to God, we become like God. By devotion on earth, we anticipate the work of heaven. We join ourselves before-hand, to the society of angels and blessed spirits above; we already enter on the delightful employment of eternity, and begin the song which is heard for ever round the throne of God.

 CHAP. CV.

The People exhorted to rejoice in God, and the Ornaments and Privileges of the Church. From the forty-seventh and forty-eighth Psalms. The Occasion of the former was the Removal of the Ark to mount Zion, and the latter of some great Deliverance experienced by David. A. M. 2962.—B. C. 1042.

O CLAP your hands, all ye people, shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

A. M. 2112. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the
 B. C. 892. city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.
 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is
 mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.
 God is known in her palaces for a refuge. For lo, the kings were
 assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they
 marvelled ; they were troubled, and hasted away.

Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind. As
 we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts,
 in the city of our God : God will establish it for ever. We have
 thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy tem-
 ple. According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the
 ends of the earth : thy right hand is full of righteousness. Let
 mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because
 of thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her :
 tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her
 palaces ; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this
 God is our God for ever and ever : he will be our guide even unto
 death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As angels and glorified saints worshipped the ascending Saviour, and
 welcomed him with shouts of joy, and the trump of God ; surely we on
 earth should join our praises with holy affections, and with understand-
 ing of his excellency and our obligations, that we may glorify him, and
 edify others also. Our backwardness to this reasonable service must be
 overcome by repeated exhortations ; and when our hearts are attuned to
 this holy worship, we should call on all around to unite in it ; for he is
 our King, and the King of all the earth. He reigneth upon the throne
 of his holiness, which yet well consists with his plenteous mercy : all the
 heathen are his inheritance and property ; may he hasten the time, when
 all kings shall serve him, and use their delegated authority to his glory !
 then will all the families of the earth be blessed in him, and he will be
 greatly exalted : whilst as the God of Abraham, he becomes their
 "shield," and exceeding "great reward."

CHAP. CVI.

Deep Contrition. From the fifty-first Psalm, which is supposed to have been written
 by David, after his sin with Uriah. A. M. 2970.—B. C. 1034.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kind-
 ness : according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out
 my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and

cleans me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions : and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight : that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts : and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness ; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation : and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips : and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would I give it : thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion : build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering : then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Contrition, when it is complete, consists in a deep unfeigned sense of our sins, mingled with all that fear, grief, and hatred, which they justly deserve, and attended moreover with a thorough change in the will, and a firm purpose of amendment of life ; and that purpose, as long as life shall last, effectually put in execution. No doubt the Psalmist, who was an inspired prophet, and was taught by the Spirit in many of his predictions, to point so directly at the Messiah, had for his own particular comfort, a cheering glimpse of the gospel light, and some blessed anticipations of the cleansing and the saving nature of the precious blood of the Lamb, that Lamb of God which was slain to take away the sins of the world, before the foundations of it were laid ; so that it was by the power of faith properly evangelical, that he arrived at this fulness of hope, and was emboldened to say, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

CHAP. CVII.

Delight in the Worship of God. From the eighty-fourth, ninety-fifth, ninety-sixth, and one hundred and thirty-second Psalms.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his

courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : fear before him, all the earth.

We will go into his tabernacles : we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest ; thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness ; and let thy saints shout for joy.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There cannot be a greater resemblance to the joys of heaven in any pleasure or happiness that we can enjoy in this world, than in that tranquillity of mind and conscience which naturally attends and accompanies our fervent devotions to God Almighty ; when we have deposited all our wishes with him, and submitted and resigned all our desires to him. Nor can there be a more lively representation upon earth, of the court and company of heaven, than in the assemblies and congregations of religious and pious men pouring out their prayers, and celebrating the praises of their Creator and Redeemer.

CHAP. CVIII.

Joy in God's Universal Government. From the ninety-seventh, ninety-eighth, and one hundredth Psalms.

THE Lord reigneth ! let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world : the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols ; worship him, all ye gods.

Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O Lord. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth : thou art exalted far above all gods. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil : he preserveth the souls of his saints ; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous ; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

O sing unto the Lord a new song : for he hath done marvellous things : his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the

victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation : his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the house of Israel : all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth : make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp ; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof : the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands : let the hills be joyful together before the Lord ; for he cometh to judge the earth : with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Know ye that the Lord he is God : it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves ; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise ; be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good ; his mercy is everlasting ; and his truth endureth to all generations.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The service of God would be the delight of all rational creatures, did they all know and love his glorious excellences, and were they sensible of their obligations to him. As far as we on earth take pleasure in worshipping him, and can serve him with gladness of heart and songs of fervent praise, we emulate the employment, and anticipate the joys of heaven. Let us then study to know the glorious and eternal JEHOVAH as our Creator, and the God in whom we live, and move, and are ; by whose arm we are upheld, and on whose bounty we are fed ; and then we shall understand how reasonable it is, that we should be thankful to him. But if we also can say,

“And when like wandering sheep we stray'd,
He brought us to his fold again,”

we shall have abundant cause “To enter into his courts with praise, to be thankful to him and to bless his name.” His goodness to us hath been great beyond expression ; and the effects of his mercy will be everlasting to our souls, and his faithfulness is the perpetual security for the performance of his largest promises.

CHAP. CIX.

An Exhortation to praise God for his Mercy. From the one hundred and third Psalm.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits : who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide : neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins ; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame ; he remembereth that we are dust.

As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children ; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens ; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This is one of the most excellent songs of thanksgiving in the whole book of Psalms. David seems affected with the highest strains of devotion, and the most lively sense of gratitude. He teaches us, by this example, to bless God, not only with our mouth, but with our whole heart, and with all the powers of our souls ; to cherish the remembrance of all his mercies, and take delight in rehearsing them, and praising him continually. The prophet here celebrates particularly the infinite mercy of God, who, knowing that we are but dust, bears with us, and does not render to us what our sins deserve ; and entertains the same compassion and kindness as a father does for his children. But he teaches us, at the same time, that the divine goodness is displayed only in behalf of those that

fear and reverence him; and that his mercy extends only to them that "keep his covenant, and remember his commandments to do them."

CHAP. CX.

The Glory of the Divine Perfections as displayed in Creation and Providence. From the one hundred and fourth Psalm.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire: who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted; where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies. He appointeth the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships : there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon thee ; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather : thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled : thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created : and thou renewest the face of the earth.

The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever : the Lord shall rejoice in his works. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth : he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live : I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet : I will be glad in the Lord. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Since the works of the creation are all of them so many demonstrations of the infinite wisdom and power of God, they may serve to us as so many arguments exciting to the constant fear of God, and to a steady, hearty obedience to all his laws. And thus we may make these works as serviceable to our spiritual interest, as they all are to our life and temporal interest. For if, whenever we see them, we would consider that these are the works of our Divine Lord and Master, to whom we are to be accountable for all our thoughts, words, and works, and that in these we may see his infinite power and wisdom—this would check us in sinning, and excite us to serve and please him who is above all control, and who hath our life and whole happiness in his power.

CHAP. CXI.

God's Omnipresence. From the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm.

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit ? or whither shall I

flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea—even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee: but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should, by meditation and prayer, seek to have our minds suitably affected with the firm belief and habitual recollection, that the just, the holy, the Almighty God, fully searches us out and knows us, however our fellow-creatures may mistake our characters. We should seriously consider, when we are alone, or in company, in the shop, the market, the place of worship, or the closet, that the eye of God is upon us; that he observeth our down-sitting, and our up-rising, and understandeth our thoughts, whether good or bad, before they become distinctly observed by our minds, or influential upon our conduct: that he compasseth and investigateth our path, and is accurately acquainted with all our ways: and that he will bring every secret work into judgment, with every word of our lips, and every thought of our hearts. For God surrounds us continually, and so lays his hand upon us, that we cannot move or think, without his cognizance and consent.

CHAP. CXII.

The Instructions, Promises, and Benefits of Wisdom. From the first, second, and third Chapters of Proverbs.

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding ;

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding ;

If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures ;

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord giveth wisdom : out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous : he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity : yea, every good path.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

She is more precious than rubies : and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand ; and in her left hand riches and honour.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her : and happy is every one that retaineth her.

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth ; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge : but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother :

For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Wisdom crieth without ; she uttereth her voice in the streets :

She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates : in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity ? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge ?

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If you desire to lead cheerful and comfortable, pleasant and happy lives, either in this world, or that which is to come, consecrate yourselves to God, and make it your business to please him; walk continually in the ways of wisdom, performing your duty both to God and man: and then you will have pleasure indeed; such pleasure as the world can neither give nor take from you; such pleasure as will refresh your minds, comfort your hearts, support your spirits, rejoice your souls in all conditions, and so make you happy both now and for ever.

It is not possible to express the horrible shame and confusion which will cover the wicked, when their characters are publicly summed up and sealed by the universal Judge; not an eye will they dare to lift up towards him whom they dishonoured in this life; whose authority they insulted, and whose laws they set at nought. The consciousness of their presumption and impiety will then overwhelm their souls with shame and dread, and remorse unspeakable; and this will be their portion for ever.

CHAP. CXIII.

Parental Instruction. From the fourth Chapter of the Book of Proverbs.

HEAR, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words : keep my commandments, and live.

Get wisdom, get understanding : forget it not ; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee : love her, and she shall keep thee.

Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom : and with all thy getting, get understanding.

Exalt her, and she shall promote thee : she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace : a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings ; and the years of thy life shall be many.

I have taught thee in the way of wisdom : I have led thee in right paths.

When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened ; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

Take fast hold of instruction ; let her not go : keep her, for she is thy life.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.

For they sleep not, except they have done mischief ; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

The way of the wicked is as darkness : they know not at what they stumble.

My son, attend to my words ; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Let them not depart from thine eyes ; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life.

Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.

Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We see wherein true wisdom consists. What excellent rules for our conduct in this life and preparation for a better, are contained in the close of this chapter! In choosing the right end, we should act with caution and deliberation. Before we resolve on any action or scheme, let us view it narrowly; be exact and critical in considering its nature and consequences, then pursue it steadily without wavering, or suffering other objects to interrupt us. By these methods we see men prosper in this world; and the like prudence, forethought, and steadiness, are necessary in the care of the soul; and it is peculiarly necessary for young people to acquire this habit.

Let us take every opportunity that our affairs will allow us, of raising our minds to God, and thanking him for his infinite love and goodness to us; and imploring the continual influences of his grace and Holy Spirit, and reinforcing our vows and purposes of persevering in his service. By this means we shall come to lead spiritual lives indeed. Our souls will be a perpetual fountain of good thoughts; and while we live here, our conversation will be in heaven; for God, and Christ, and the things above, will have our hearts, though the world hath our bodies.

CHAP. CXIV.

Prudence and Industry. From the sixth Chapter of Proverbs.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.

Frowardness is in his heart : he deviseth mischief continually ; he soweth discord.

These six things doth the Lord hate : yea, seven are an abomination unto him :

A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother :

Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

When thou goest, it shall lead thee ; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee ; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

For the commandment is a lamp ; and the law is light ; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Diligence is every man's wisdom and duty ; that he may not be a burden to society, that he may be out of the way of various temptations, and have it in his power to relieve others. The sluggard is therefore referred to the insignificant but provident ant ; who, destitute of reason, and without instructor or ruler, takes more proper care for the future, than the slothful do with all their advantages. Habits of indolence grow upon people ; at first they only desire a short respite, a little, and a little more indulgence in sloth ; but soon life runs to waste—poverty and meanness being the inevitable consequences.

But it is still more important, that men should avoid indolence in the concerns of their souls ; and that in the present transient and precarious summer of life and health, they should prepare for the approaching winter of sickness, death, judgment, and eternity. To numbers it may be well said, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise."—"How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard ? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep ?"—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light !"

CHAP. CXV.

The Excellency and Eternity of Wisdom. From the eighth Chapter of Proverbs.

DOTH not wisdom cry ? and understanding put forth her voice ? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

Unto you, O men, I call ; and my voice is to the sons of man.

O ye simple, understand wisdom : and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

Hear ; for I will speak of excellent things ; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

For my mouth shall speak truth ; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness ; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

Receive my instruction, and not silver ; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

For wisdom is better than rubies ; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil : pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom : I am understanding ; I have strength.

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

I love them that love me ; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Riches and honour are with me ; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold ; and my revenue than choice silver.

I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.

That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth:

While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;

Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The noble description here given of the effects of wisdom, should increase our esteem of, and value for it. Wisdom will lead us to choose the best ends, and to pursue them by the best means, and therefore comprehends the knowledge of our duty, the fear of God, and a hatred of evil. This wisdom is the greatest excellency of a rational being. It is to be preferred to gold and rubies, and every thing the heart of man can desire. It brings us substance; what is solid and durable, and will afford us the highest and noblest delight. It directs in the government of kingdoms, churches, and families; discovers the useful arts of life, and especially ennobles, enriches, and sanctifies the soul. It is absolutely neces-

sary for all the sons of men; all their learning and wealth, without this, will only make them so much the more contemptible and miserable. Let us all then, especially those who are in early life, pursue it; for Wisdom loves those that love her, and those that seek her early shall find her.

CHAP. CXVI.

Maxims of Wisdom, chiefly contrasting Honesty, Humility, Faithfulness, and Liberality, with the opposite Vices. From the eleventh Chapter of Proverbs.

A FALSE balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight.

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivereth from death.

The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

A tale-bearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

A gracious woman retaineth honour; and strong men retain riches.

The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

The wicked worketh a deceitful work; but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.

They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The liberal soul shall be made fat. In almost every instance, that which is best for us is best for our neighbours; in giving, lending, selling, or the contrary, covetousness commonly defeats its own ends; and he who grasps at unfair advantages, comes short of such as he might conscientiously and creditably have secured. This indeed is one effect of human selfishness, and exposes its folly: yet it still continues to influence the conduct of almost all men, and often, in circumstances of such cruelty, as are shocking to relate, and amidst general execration. The common excuse, indeed, for covetousness, is regard to a man's family: yet this should, in fact, teach a contrary lesson; for the "seed of the righteous shall be delivered" from those evils which overwhelm the posterity of the wicked.

Acts of prudent liberality do often, in their very nature, promote worldly wealth, but the heavenly riches, they never fail to increase. Whereas the niggard, by his very covetous and unjust practices, as often brings himself to poverty. This, at least, is certain—the more any man withholds of which he ought to spend for the benefit of himself and others, still the poorer he is, for no man is so poor as he that does no good with what he hath.

CHAP. CXVII.

The Advantages of Prudence, Diligence, Piety, and Sincerity, and the Mischiefs resulting from the opposite Vices. From the thirteenth Chapter of the Book of Proverbs.

A WISE son heareth his father's instruction : but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth : but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life : but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing : but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

A righteous man hateth lying : but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.

Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way : but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing : there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

The ransom of man's life are his riches : but the poor heareth not rebuke.

The light of the righteous rejoiceth : but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

Only by pride cometh contention : but with the well-advised is wisdom.

Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished : but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick : but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed : but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Good understanding giveth favour : but the way of transgressors is hard.

Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge : but a fool layeth upon his folly.

A wicked messenger falleth into mischief : but a faithful ambassador is health.

Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction : but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul : but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise : but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Evil pursueth sinners : but to the righteous good shall be repaid.

A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children : and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

Much food is in the tillage of the poor : but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son : but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The light of the righteous rejoiceth ; but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. If we take an estimate of human happiness from the morals of men, and the riches of the mind, how superior an advantage has virtue to vice ! True virtue is not only a treasure that endangers not, but it is the securest treasure, and blessing of life ; it can neither be taken from us, nor we from it. It is a *light* that casts a splendour around us, and joys within us ; it is a happiness entire and complete, not only in the opinion of others who behold it, but it is sweetly felt and tasted in ourselves, and shed abroad in our hearts. All suffrages, both of the world and our own consciences, concur to pronounce it the true and only perfect felicity of man. But the happiness of vice is no more than a *lamp* is to the light of the sun : it may have some glimmerings of light, some faint shadow of happiness, but hath nothing solid or lasting in it. Few, indeed, are so wicked but they have a *lamp*, some show or appearance of virtue ; and so far only are they happy as that appearance goes. But death puts an end to both ; thus life and their *lamp* are extinguished together. No light but that which is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, can carry us to the regions of bliss. And this is the *light of the righteous* here spoken of, a light which cannot be put out by affliction or death ; but rather is still more brightened by both ; still shines more and more to the perfect day, and therefore *rejoiceth* for ever. Lord ! give unto us this *light*, and take what else thou pleasest away.

CHAP. CXVIII.

Sundry Maxims, showing the Excellence of the Christian Virtues. From the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twenty-first Chapters of Proverbs.

A SOFT answer turneth away wrath : but grievous words stir up anger.

The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright : but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life : but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

A fool despiseth his father's instruction : but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

In the house of the righteous is much treasure : but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord : but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord : but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge : but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife ; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth : and a word spoken in due season, how good is it !

He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul : but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom : and before honour is humility.

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes ; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.

When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

How much better is it to get wisdom than gold ! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver !

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil ; he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

An high look, and a proud heart, and the ploughing of the wicked, is sin.

The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty, only to want.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The best defence, as well as remedy, against anger, is meekness. There is an invincible charm in the mild looks and soft words of this pacific virtue, which shames, or tames, the fiercest wrath. But anger opposed to anger, adds fuel to the flame, and rather enrages than allays its fury. In such rencountres as these, it appears that true fortitude lies in the mild and gentle dispositions of this truly Christian, though despised, virtue; which is, therefore, most properly cardinal, as it is rather the cause than the effect of a calm and steady courage. It receives the fire and most violent attacks of anger, but without emotion or surprise: It beareth all things, endureth all things, and overcometh evil with good. To bear and to forbear, is its character, and its victory. To the roughest chidings of a superior, it stands not sullenly silent, but owns a real fault, by an in-

genuous confession, and wipes off unjust blame, by a mild and modest vindication. To the clamorous revilings, and injurious treatment of equals or inferiors, its only revenge is patience or disregard: and, in all disputes, it gains the better of others' passions, by suppressing its own. Its constant and most effectual answer to the rudest assaults, is a good word or a good example.

CHAP. CXIX.

A good Name, Prudence, Uprightness, and Maxims relating to various particulars in human Conduct. From the twenty-second Chapter of Proverbs.

A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee his day, even to thee.

Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth ; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee ?

Rob not the poor, because he is poor : neither oppress the afflicted in the gate :

For the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

Make no friendship with an angry man ; and with a furious man thou shalt not go :

Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.

If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee ?

Remove not the ancient land-mark, which thy fathers have set.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? he shall stand before kings ; he shall not stand before mean men.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are continually reminded, that the rich and poor will meet together before their common Creator, as their impartial Judge. If then the rich have authority over his poor neighbor, let him use it with gentleness and without arrogance or contempt: if he lend, or give to him, let him not attempt to domineer over him on that account, remembering that both are upon a level before the Lord. Riches and power are as land to be cultivated: but he who sows iniquity will reap vanity, and be turned out of his stewardship with disgrace. They who oppress the poor to increase their riches; yea, they who spend that in presents and entertainments for the rich, which was intrusted to them that they might feed the poor, will surely come to want either here or hereafter. But he whose eye is looking out continually for necessitous persons, to whom he may dispense his bounty, and who gives liberally of his bread to the poor, shall abound in blessings: and the rich have the poor always with them, that whensoever they will, they may do them good, and so obtain these blessings. And let the poor remember that the Lord made the difference betwixt their lot and that of the rich: let them then submit to his wise and righteous will, without envy or murmurings: let them be humble, obliging, frugal, and industrious, attending to the duties of their station, and expecting the great decisive day: for "by humility, and the fear of the Lord, are true riches, and honour and life;" but proud, ungodly, dishonest, and licentious poverty, is indeed disgraceful and ruinous.

CHAP. CXX.

Kindness to Enemies, Self-Conceit, Slothfulness, Procrastination, Vain-Glory, Wrath, Envy, Good Reproof, Contentment, and human Sympathy. From the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-seventh Chapters of Proverbs.

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink;

For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

Open rebuke is better than secret love.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother far off.

My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

Hell and destruction are never full: so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

As the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Among the excellent maxims here given for our instruction, this one is deserving of particular notice—"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—Let us learn, then, not to set too high a value upon any earthly goods, nor to bestow any great degree of affection upon them; for they are all movable and mutable. Riches have wings, and swiftly pass from one hand to another. Honour is a glaring meteor, that blazes for a time, and is soon extinct. Reputation is an airy bubble, blown up and broke at pleasure, by the fickle breath of the injudicious multitude. In a word, power is precarious: pleasure is very fugitive, and so is life itself; and, therefore, what real good, what solid satisfaction can there be in any of these things? without doubt, if we expect it from them, we shall find ourselves mistaken in our account, and reap nothing in the end "but vanity and vexation of spirit." To prevent which wretched disappointment, our only way must be to fix our hearts upon heavenly treasures which no moth nor rust can corrupt, and to place our affections entirely upon God, who is immutably and inexhaustibly good, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

 CHAP. CXXI.

Various Maxims relating to Human Virtue. From the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth Chapters of Proverbs.

THE wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.

Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.

Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Happy is the man that feareth always : but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings : but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

To have respect of persons is not good : for, for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

He that rebuketh a man afterward shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression ; the same is the companion of a destroyer.

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool : but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack : but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice ; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father : but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor : but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

Scornful men bring a city into a snare : but wise men turn away wrath.

The rod and reproof give wisdom : but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest : yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words ? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

A man's pride shall bring him low : but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

The fear of man bringeth a snare : but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

A man's pride shall bring him low ; but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Is this indeed the fact ? Is humility the only way to praiseworthy distinction ? If so, it may be well said, Come down, vain man, from the throne which thy vanity and thy flatterers have erected for thee in thine own imagination, and behold thyself springing from the dust,

and borrowing all thou art so highly vain of from the same original. Behold thy heart polluted and enslaved by mean appetites, and brutal passions; and thy boasted reason imposed on by slight appearances, hoodwinked with childish ignorance, and misled by shameful errors. Behold thy body subject to accidents, afflicted with sickness, and destroyed by death, which stands by thy side, waiting for the signal to strike thee down. But above all, remember thy sins, thy many open and secret sins, and behold thyself led by them, like a slave, far from thy known happiness, through a course of life condemned by thy own reason and conscience to endless disgrace and misery. Behold this picture of thyself; consider it attentively; and then tell us, Canst thou be proud

CHAP. CXXII.

The Prayer of Agur. From the thirtieth Chapter of the Book of Proverbs.

THE words of Agur the son of Ja'keh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ith'iel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Two things have I required of thee: deny me them not before I die:

Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me,

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

You who are placed by Providence in that middle situation of life which Agur prays for, as being the most desirable to a wise and good man, if he were left to his own choice, be thankful to God that you do

not feel the miseries of poverty, "but are fed with food convenient for you;" and that you are free from the snares and temptations of riches. Envy not the gay and painted outside of greatness, when you do not see the secret worm of discontent and disappointment, of baffled ambition, and mortified pride, and stifled resentment, that often gnaws within; but know your own happiness and be content, believing that Providence has chosen better for you than you would have done for yourselves. Be diligent and industrious in your callings, and honest in all your dealings. Affect not to live above your condition. Let simplicity and neatness be the ornaments of your houses, and persons, and tables, and what you thus retrench from the superfluity and vanity of living, will supply your charity, and enable you to lay up for yourselves a good foundation for the time to come, that ye may lay hold of eternal life.

CHAP. CXXIII.

The Character and Value of a virtuous Woman. From the thirty-first Chapter of Proverbs.

THE words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it ; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing ; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom ; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed : her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain : but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands ; and let her own works praise her in her gates.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is well worthy of observation, that in this description of a virtuous woman, eleven of the twenty-two verses are taken up in setting forth her industry and the effects of it. A variety of language is made use of to describe her different employments, to recommend simplicity of manners, and make good housewifery and honest labour to be admired in the rich and noble, as well as in the poor and obscure among women. In works of the several kinds here named, queens and princes of old time disdained not to be occupied.

Happy the children of such a mother ; they will be living proofs of the care taken by her in their education, when she taught them to walk by the paths of virtue and honour, to the mansions of rest and glory. Happy the husband of such a wife, who sees all things prosper under her direction, and the blessing of Heaven derived to his family through her ; they will all join in proclaiming, that among the women who do well, honour is chiefly due to the virtuous and diligent wife, the affectionate and sensible mother.

CHAP. CXXIV.

Vanity and Vexation of all worldly Possessions and Enjoyments. From the first and second Chapters of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

THE words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities ; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun ? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh : but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also

ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

I the preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: also I had great possessions above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces.

So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

BRIEF REVIEW

Who was the writer of this chapter?—What acts does he mention that he had performed?—How did he compare with others in riches?—What did he say of all his possessions?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If indeed, like the sun, we rejoice to run our course of duty, and make haste to fill up our measure of services to our generation, according to the will of God, and then seek our rest in him, the shortness of human life and the vanity of the world will be no loss to us. But if we seek our happiness, and attempt to take up our rest on earth, where all things are full of labour, we shall at last be where we set out; all our toil and inquietude will be in vain, and we must then go and give an account of ourselves to God our Creator and Judge. We cannot alter this state of things, which is the effect of man's apostasy, and of the wrath of God against his sins; our wisdom therefore consists in accommodating ourselves to it; and in ceasing to expect satisfaction here, where every short-lived enjoyment either palls and nauseates through excess, or grows insipid through repetition. For no discovery has yet been made of any new source of pleasure or happiness, which is exempt from vanity and vexation: after all our boasted improvements, the world is the same discontented, disappointed place, that men complained of in former ages: and it will be the same when we are gone, or forgotten, like those former things of which there is no remembrance.

 CHAP. CXXV.

Religious Worship, Vanity of Riches, Benefit of Sorrow above vain Mirth, Advantage of Wisdom, and the Sin and Ruin of Man. From the fifth and seventh Chapters of Ecclesiastes.

KEEP thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.

Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver: nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat

them : and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes ? The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much : but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting : for that is the end of all men ; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter ; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning ; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry : for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these ? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

Wisdom is good with an inheritance : and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence : but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it. In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider : God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright ; but they have sought out many inventions.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is said concerning going to the house of God ?—What is said of making vows ?—What is said of mourning and feasting ?—What declaration is made of man ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the wise man bids us go to the house of mourning, when he tells us that sorrow is better than laughter, he is not to be understood as prohibiting all mirth, as requiring us to wear a perpetual cloud on our brow, and to sequester ourselves from every cheerful entertainment of social life. His true meaning is, that there is a certain temper and state of mind which is of far greater consequence to real happiness, than the habitual indulgence of giddy and thoughtless mirth ; that, for the attainment and cultivation of this temper, frequent returns of grave reflection are necessary ; that, upon this account, it is profitable to give admission to those views of human distress, which tend to awaken such reflections in the mind, and that thus, from the vicissitudes of sorrow, which we either experience in our own lot, or sympathize with in the lot of others, much wisdom and improvement may be derived.

CHAP. CXXVI.

Like things happen to good and bad men till death. Suddenness of Calamities, and the Want of Respect shown to Wisdom. From the ninth Chapter of Ecclesiastes.

FOR all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God : no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all : there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked ; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean ; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not : as is the good, so is the sinner ; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.

This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all : yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For the living know that they shall die : but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward ; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished ; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill ; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time ; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare ; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me : There was a little city, and few men within it ; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city ; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength : nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We may observe upon this chapter, 1. That though good and bad events are common to all men, as Solomon acquaints us, yet just men and

their actions are nevertheless in the hands of God, who will judge both the righteous and the wicked. 2. When we are told by Solomon, "that the dead have no longer any share in what passes in this world, and that their love and hatred are both at an end; and therefore, that we ought to eat our bread with joy all the days of our life;" his design is, that we should improve the advantages of life, and make a wise use of what we have in possession. But let us not abuse that notion, and imagine we are at full liberty to give ourselves up to worldly joys and pleasures, and to say with the ungodly, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." 3. Solomon teaches us, that wisdom and strength are profitable upon many occasions; but that, however, we are not the masters of contingencies; and that we often fall into misfortunes, without being able to foresee or prevent them. This teaches us never to rely upon our own strength, prudence, and address, and to remember always that we depend upon Providence.

CHAP. CXXVII.

Early Piety and the Fear of God. From the eleventh and twelfth Chapters of Ecclesiastes.

CAST thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of

the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low ; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail : because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets : or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher ; all is vanity. And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge : yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words : and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished : of making many books there is no end ; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : fear God, and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is said of the man who lives many years ?—What is said to the young man ?—Why are youth directed to remember their Creator ?—What is said to be the whole duty of man ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Let all, especially the young, seriously think of and prepare for death and judgment, for they are most ready to forget it. However pleasant your path may be, and though light may shine around you on every side, yet *remember the days of darkness* ; you must expect your share of trouble and sorrow. Do not raise your expectations too high, but be moderate in your pursuits and enjoyments ; affliction and death will certainly come ; and *after death the judgment*. Young people should recollect the vanity of childhood and youth ; what dangerous temptations surround them, and how uncertain life is ; and should consider the future judgment to correct their love of pleasure, and keep them from sensual mirth. But if they will despise the advice of their friends, and *walk in the way of their own hearts*, they will bring evil upon their flesh and sorrow upon their souls, and will have a dreadful account to give at last. Let us all therefore, *seeing we look for such things, be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace at his appearing*.

CHAP. CXXVIII.

Isaiah's Complaint of Judah, and Exhortation to Repentance. From the first Chapter of Isaiah.

THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth : for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters : they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Why should ye be stricken any more ? Ye will revolt more and more : the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it ; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores : they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire : your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a besieged city. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom ; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord : I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts ? Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me ; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth : they are a trouble unto me ; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood.

Wash ye, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord :

though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land : but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Whose son was Isaiah?—What was the moral condition of Judah?—What does he caution the people not to do?—What does he exhort them to do?—With what are they threatened if they continue disobedient?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

By the grace of the gospel, the most enslaved sinner may “put away the evils of his doings from before the eyes of the Lord;” he may be enabled “to cease to do evil, and may learn to do well:” and may also find pardon and acceptance by faith in Jesus Christ. And when his faith worketh by love of God and man, and he seeks to do judgment, to relieve the oppressed, and to patronize the fatherless and widow, according to his station in society ; this change of temper and conduct will prove him interested in all the blessings of a free salvation. Well then may Jehovah call upon us to draw near to him, that he may reason with us ; for all his dispensations are most righteous and reasonable. What can be more rational, than every precept of his holy law ? What more reasonable than his call to repent and believe his gospel ? If we be willing and obedient, our sins, though of crimson and scarlet hue, will become as snow or wool ; and every blessing will be communicated : and if we continue to refuse and rebel, we must be consumed by his righteous vengeance : “for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

CHAP. CXXIX.

Predictions relating to the Establishment and Glory of Christ's Kingdom. From the second and fourth Chapters of Isaiah.

It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people : and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift

up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of? In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is the prediction concerning the mountain of the Lord's house? —What one concerning war? —What one relating to man? —What is said shall be the condition of the branch of the Lord?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

While we wait and pray for those glorious days, when the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of Jesus, and all their inhabitants being humbled and changed by his grace, shall live in equity, truth, and

love; cultivate the arts of useful industry; study to be quiet, and to do their own business, and learn war no more: let us avail ourselves of the light afforded us, and come and walk in it. Let us remember that when true religion greatly flourishes, men bestow great diligence, and take much delight in going up to the house of the Lord, and in exciting others to accompany them; they desire and expect that he should teach them his ways, in order that they may walk in them: and they gladly receive his law from mount Zion as their rule of duty, welcome the authority as well as the salvation of the Redeemer, and submit to his rebukes, as well as desire his consolations. And let us remember also, that the humble disciple of Christ is, in every age, a harmless and blameless, a benevolent and quiet person, who follows peace and holiness, forbearing and forgiving others, as Christ hath forgiven him: insomuch, that if all were of his temper, wars and furious contentions, public or private, would soon be annihilated.

CHAP. CXXX.

The Coming and Kingdom of Christ. From the seventh, ninth, eleventh, and twelfth Chapters of Isaiah.

BEHOLD, a virgin shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he

shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

BRIEF REVIEW.

By what names was it declared that Christ should be called?—What is said of the increase of his government?—What is the prediction concerning the peaceable nature of the subjects of his kingdom?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We read in the beginning of this chapter, “The people that walketh in darkness have seen a great light;” which words were fulfilled, not only in the deliverance which God formerly vouchsafed the Jews, when he defended them against their enemies; but chiefly, in the favour granted to that people, and afterwards to other nations, in causing the light of his gospel to shine upon them when they were in the darkness of sin and of death. This happy change was wrought by the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose glory, divinity, and eternal kingdom, are here described in terms so clear and remarkable, and which can be applied to no other.

How solicitous should we be to answer the design of his gospel, and to have those illustrious prophecies of its own good effects fulfilled in us. Let us make it appear that we are Christians indeed, by the peaceableness and gentleness of our disposition, the softness and sweetness of our tempers! Let nothing malicious, revengeful, sour, contentious, or unkind, be ever found in us. Let us cultivate peace; labour to promote

each other's happiness; and in this, "follow on to know the Lord;" and by increasing in our acquaintance with him who is love, be conformed to his image, and walk in love, even as Christ hath loved us.

CHAP. CXXXI.

Desolation of Babylon and Restoration of Israel predicted. From the thirteenth and fourteenth Chapters of Isaiah.

THE burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be

joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms: That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is the prediction concerning the appearance of the heavens?—What is said of the desolation of Babylon?—By what name is the king of Babylon called?—What is said of the seed of evil-doers?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The former part of this prophecy is one of the most beautiful examples that can be given of elegance of composition, variety of imagery, and sublimity of sentiment and diction, in the prophetic style: and the latter part consists of an ode of singular excellence. As the Babylonians were to take Jerusalem, burn the temple, and carry the people into captivity, God, to give the Jews a right sense of this great event, and for their consolation, was pleased to declare long before-hand, that the empire of the Babylonians should be destroyed. This prediction is very wonderful. Isaiah expressly declares, that Babylon should be taken at a time, and in a manner, which the Babylonians could not have foreseen; that it should be utterly destroyed, and never recover from its ruins, but become a retreat for wild beasts. Isaiah foretells this two hundred years before, when the Babylonish empire was in the most flourishing condition; at the end of which time Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians, as we learn from the book of Daniel, and from profane history.

The fall of Babylon, and its utter desolation, should be a warning to all nations. So Providence undoubtedly intended them to be. When we consider it as the greatest and most powerful monarchy in the world; the extent, strength, wealth, and grandeur of its capital; what little probability there was that it should ever be taken; and especially that it was predicted, so long before the event, that it should be utterly destroyed and left desolate; who would not adore that spirit of prophecy which foretold it, and be afraid of the anger of the Almighty power that executed the vengeance!

 CHAP. CXXXII.

A Song of Praise to God for the Assurance and Manifestation of his Mercy. From the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth Chapters of Isaiah. B. C. 712.

O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all

people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low even to the ground, he bringeth it even to the dust. The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified: thou hast removed it far unto all the ends of the earth. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is said concerning the poor and needy?—What promise is made concerning death?—In what place was this song of praise to be sung?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The praises and thanksgiving contained in this chapter relate, first, to the deliverance of the Jews, and their return from Babylon; but they chiefly suit that great deliverance, which the Messiah was one day to procure for men, by redeeming them and purchasing salvation for them. We are chiefly to observe that these words of the prophet, "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces;" will not be fully accomplished till death, our last enemy, shall be

destroyed by the resurrection, and Jesus Christ shall introduce his sincere disciples into eternal glory. This expectation ought to produce in us a great desire to partake of these excellent promises, and be a powerful motive to us to bless the Lord who has promised them, and to rejoice continually in expectation of that salvation which shall be fully revealed at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. CXXXIII.

Judah threatened for trusting in Egypt ; but is assured of returning Mercies and glorious Times for the Church. From the thirtieth Chapter of Isaiah.—B. C. 712.

Wo to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me ; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin : that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth ; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt ! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. For the Egyptian shall help in vain, and to no purpose : therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever : that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord ; which say to the seers, See not ; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits : get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon ; therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel ; In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength : and ye would not. But ye said, No ; for we will flee upon horses ; therefore shall ye flee ; and, We will ride upon the swift ; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one ; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee ; till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill.

And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy

upon you : for the Lord is a God of judgment : blessed are all they that wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem : thou shalt weep no more : he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry ; when he shall hear it he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers : and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal ; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous : in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy : his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire : and his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity. Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept ; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hail-stones.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those possessions, connections, or dependencies, which prevent men from seeking help and happiness from God, will expose them to indignation and wo. Our proneness to expect assistance or comfort from creatures, shows that we are not duly sensible of their vanity and insufficiency, and of the all-sufficiency of God ; and that we do not believe, that he will fulfil both his promises and threatenings. But he will assuredly arise against the house of evil-doers, and against the help of those that work iniquity ; and they will all fall together under his outstretched arm. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will appear for the defence of his Church, and he will not be abased for the noise of those numbers who encourage each other against him ; but no emblems can fully express his terrible

majesty and his tender mercy in caring for his people. Let sinners then take warning by the doom, and not follow the steps of them that perished in their sins; let us give him our whole hearts, and renounce all our idols, and he will abundantly compensate all our losses. But terror and destruction pursue and will overtake all the ungodly; and those dispensations and perfections of God, which ensure the satisfaction of believers, will consume all unbelievers with an everlasting destruction!

CHAP. CXXXIV.

The Blessings of Christ's Kingdom predicted. From the thirty-second and thirty-fifth Chapters of Isaiah. A. M. 3282.—B. C. 720.

BEHOLD, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry; and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand. The Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places; when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not : behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense ; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing : for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water ; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those : the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The view here given us of the way of religion, should engage us to walk in it. It is the way of holiness, of universal rectitude, purity and goodness ; a safe, plain, and pleasant way ; there is no difficulty in finding it, no danger in walking in it. We meet there with the best company, and have God for our guardian and guide, our companion and friend. In this way then let us walk, and proceed therein with vigour and cheerfulness ; and let us strengthen each other's hands, and encourage each other's hearts. This delightful road will at length bring us to the heavenly Zion, where sorrow and sighing, where sin, corruptions, and enemies shall be no more ; but upon our heads shall be everlasting joy, and in our mouths everlasting songs.

CHAP. CXXXV.

Sennache'rib invades Judah, and Hezekiah's Prayer. From the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh Chapters of Isaiah. B. C. 720

AND Rab'shakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you : for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us : this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah : for thus saith the king of

Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me : and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern ; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria ? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad ? where are the gods of Sepharva'im ? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand ? Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand ? But they held their peace, and answered him not a word : for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joab, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab'shakeh. And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sack-cloth, and went into the house of the Lord ; and prayed, saying,

O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth : thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear ; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see : and hear all the words of Sennache'rib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire ; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone : therefore they have destroyed them. Now, therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennache'rib king of Assyria : This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him ; Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed ; and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high ? even against the Holy One of Israel. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. For I will defend this city, to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp

of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennache'rib departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adram'melech and Share'zer his sons smote him with the sword ; and they escaped into the land of Armenia : and E'sar-had'don his son reigned in his stead.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What king of Assyria invaded Judah?—Whom did he send to Hezekiah?—What did Rab'shakeh say to the Jews?—How was Hezekiah affected when he heard the words of Rab'shakeh?—What measures did Hezekiah adopt for security?—How many of the Assyrian army did the angel destroy?—What became of Sennache'rib.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Let us own our dependence upon God, and regard him as our only defence and salvation in time of trouble, seeking him as Hezekiah did here, by devout prayers and supplications, and craving the assistance of his Church and ministry, as this king did of the prophet Isaiah, to obtain of him an answer of peace and love. But let not the day of rebuke and trouble be the only occasion of such addresses. Let us walk with God in our daily conversation, and maintain constant communion with him. Let us be sensible not only of our wants, but his mercies, and abound in thanksgivings as well as prayers. Let us be true to our part of the covenant of grace, and as duly observe the honour, pleasure, and will of God, as we hope for the benefit of his favour and protection. This will stir up his zeal for us, to be very nigh unto us, in all that we call upon him for. Of such seekers he will be easily found : to such worshippers he will show himself a most gracious and bountiful benefactor through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

 CHAP. CXXXVI.

A sublime Representation of the Majesty of God, contrasted with the Insignificancy and Vanity of Man. From the fortieth Chapter of Isaiah. B. C. 708.

WHO hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of

judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: that bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power: not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is good to think of the differences between the glory and power of man, and that of God. All the glory of man is soon blasted, his power weak, his wisdom soon confounded, his beauty fading, and his promises fail; but **JEHOVAH** is the all-wise and Almighty God, faithful and true, and his word stands for ever. Let us imprint these thoughts upon our minds, that we may not be fond of the fading glories of this world ourselves, nor envy or admire them in others; but make God our portion, and his word our treasure; it will be a source of everlasting security and joy.

As we cannot comprehend the mysterious nature and the majesty of the Lord our God; let us learn to admire and adore those displays of his perfections, which are made in his works and in his word. Let us abase

ourselves before Him, deeply sensible of our meanness as creatures, and our vileness as sinners; and let us never presume to object to his appointments or decision, as if we were qualified to teach Him knowledge, before whom all nations are as nothing and vanity.

CHAP. CXXXVII.

God's Promise to Christ and to his People, and his Exhortation to remember his Goodness. From the forty-second, forty-third, and forty-fourth Chapters of Isaiah. B. C. 708.

BEHOLD my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make

darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me: for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself: that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The forgiveness of sin is that glorious act of grace, which in Christ, and for him, was granted to all mankind; and contains the sum and substance of the gospel, which proclaims a general pardon to all the world, even unto all that return to God by a sincere repentance, and faith in Christ. Clouds, especially thick clouds, obscure the face of heaven, and hide from us the light and comfort of the sun: so sin interposed between God and man; had robbed us of the light of heavenly truth, and overspread the whole world with darkness and horror, universal ignorance, and guilty fears. The coming of Christ dispelled these gross clouds, and restored the light of heaven; removed the thick veil of sin, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For he himself is the life, the way, and the truth: he is "the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" and in his light only shall we see the light of divine truth.

CHAP. CXXXVIII.

Prediction of Christ being sent to the Gentiles. From the forty-ninth Chapter of Isaiah.
B. C. 706

LISTEN, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far: The Lord hath called me, and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.

And now, saith the Lord that formed me to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages: that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: and I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.

Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to

the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people : and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers : they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet ; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord ; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered : for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What is said in this chapter, was in part fulfilled when, about two hundred years after these predictions, the Jews were called from the Babylonish captivity. God then displayed in a glorious manner, his power in the sight of all nations : he gathered them together in their own country, and caused them there to increase and multiply, and blessed them exceedingly. But these promises more especially relate to the Christian Church. By faith, we may lift up our eyes, and behold multitudes from every land, gathering together to replenish and adorn the spiritual Jerusalem. We may behold the ensign erected—hear the signal given—sons and daughters of the Church coming from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south—kings, and queens, and all the nobles of the earth, vying with each other, who shall show most honour to true godliness, and do most service to the cause of their divine Master. Let us then, as Christians, wait and pray for the performance of all these glorious prophecies, and, let us, especially, give diligence to make our own calling and election sure, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

CHAP. CXXXIX.

An Exhortation to trust in God, to believe in the Redemption of Christ, to receive his Ministers, and to rejoice in the Establishment of his Kingdom. From the fifty-first and fifty-second Chapters of Isaiah. B. C. 706.

HEARKEN to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord ; look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. For the Lord shall comfort Zion : he will comfort all her waste places : and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord ; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you: Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money. For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good

tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem : for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations : and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

The promises of God should invigorate our efforts to obtain the proposed blessings of the gospel ; and to promote the purity, peace, and enlargement of the Church, which they teach us to expect. Whilst we call on the Lord to awake and put on strength, for our help and salvation, we should attend to his exhortation to be faithful in the performance of our own duties. Let Christians do this—let them be habitual in the cultivation of personal religion—let them become indeed a light to the world of mankind, and they may expect the fulfilment of many of the glorious promises of Scripture ;—then the redeemed of the Lord shall be delivered from captivity, Zion shall resound with songs of praise, and their gladness on earth shall form a delightful foretaste of heavenly joys.

CHAP. CXL.

The Sufferings of Christ foretold. From the fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah. B. C. 706.

Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground : he hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him : he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was

afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment : and who shall declare his generation ? for he was cut off out of the land of the living : for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong : because he hath poured out his soul unto death : and he was numbered with the transgressors ; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing can more clearly or more expressly represent the state of humiliation through which the Messiah was to pass, nor the state of exaltation and glory, than this admirable prophecy. The Spirit of God here foretels that the Messiah should appear in a mean condition ; that for this reason he should be despised and rejected by the Jews ; that he should take our sins upon him ; that he should by his death atone for them that he should be numbered with the transgressors ; and that he should be honourably interred after his death. We see likewise described in this prophecy, the perfect innocence of our Lord, and his patience under all the injuries and affronts he received. Lastly, the prophet foretels, that after the Messiah was made an offering for sin, he should see his seed, he should prolong his days. The meaning of which is, that his death should be followed by his resurrection, and exaltation to glory ; that he should gather together his Church ; that he would justify those who should believe in him, and would establish his kingdom in the world. This prophecy, which presents us with a view of the principal circumstances of the passion of Jesus Christ, should fully convince us that he is the great Redeemer spoken of by the prophets ; that his doctrine is true and divine ; that his sufferings and death are the wonderful means by which God has been pleased to save men : and that, being now exalted in glory, he is able to save all those who come unto God by him, and obey him.

CHAP. CXLII.

Invitations to receive the Blessings of the Gospel. From the fifty-fifth Chapter of Isaiah.
B. C. 706.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shall call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The means of grace are often represented in Scripture, under the emblems of streams and springs of water; and grace itself is described by

the metaphor of meat and drink; it being of the same use to the soul, as meat and food are to the body. As the one cleanses and refreshes, the other strengthens and feeds the body; so these spiritual waters purify and refresh the soul: they are also as free as the natural, and may be had without money, and without price. All may freely drink of these springs, that have but a thirst to desire them: all are welcome to this food who please to accept of the invitation; for so the great Ruler of this divine feast, the holy Jesus, explains and confirms this his messenger's invitation, when he came in person to prepare the heavenly banquet; "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." And as here the prophet cries, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come," &c., so that beloved apostle tells us, "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

CHAP. CXLII.

Future Glories of the Church. From the sixtieth Chapter of Isaiah. B. C. 706.

ARISE, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the

pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. And thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The whole earth, from the fall of Adam to the end of time, would have been covered with ignorance, error, wickedness, and misery, if the Son of God had not come a light into the world. This Sun of righteousness communicated some heavenly light to mankind, even before he actually arose; but his bright beams have been diffused far more vigorously and widely since that joyful event. Blessed be his name, they still shine, with increasing splendour, to direct wandering and lost sinners in the way to heaven. The gates of Zion are ever open to receive those who come with the desire of their hearts to be enrolled as her citizens; the prayer of humble faith to Zion's God and King, can never be unseasonable, night or day; and every true convert is an accession to the strength, beauty, and honour of this spiritual dominion, at which angels in heaven will rejoice.

CHAP. CXLIII.

Offices of Christ, and the desire of the Prophet to confirm the Church in the Promises of God. From the sixty-first and sixty-second Chapters of Isaiah. B. C. 706.

THE Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek : he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God : to comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God : for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth ; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory : and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken ; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate : for the Lord delighteth in thee.

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night : ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Go through, go through the gates ; prepare ye the way of the people ; cast up, cast up the highway ; gather out the stones ; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh ; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord : and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The prophecy contained in the first part of this chapter relates to Jesus Christ, who is that great prophet that was anointed with the Spirit of the Lord, to preach the gospel to men, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to publish the acceptable year of the Lord. But this same prophecy teaches us that these valuable blessings are only reserved for the meek and humble; for those that are broken-hearted for sin, and desire the grace of God. This must be the state of those who expect to share in the blessings which Jesus Christ has purchased for us, and in that joy which the Church shall experience when its Redeemer again cometh to judge the world. Let us, then, welcome him into our hearts, and seek comfort and salvation through him. Let us remember that the great end of his mission, and ministration, and all the comforts which he bestows on his people, is, that we may be righteous; trees of righteousness, bringing forth the fruit of it abundantly; ornaments to the Church, and serviceable to all about them.

 CHAP. CXLIV.

Expostulation with Judah, and Exhortation to Repentance. From the second and thirteenth Chapters of Jeremiah. B. C. 628.

MOREOVER the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend: evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.

Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed:

they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the Lord. In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets like a destroying lion.

B. C. 606. Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.

Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory. The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In this prophecy God professes to retain the same kindness and favourable disposition towards Israel which he had manifested in their earlier days. He expostulateth with them on their ungrateful returns for his past goodness; and showeth, that it was not want of affection in him, but their own extreme and unparalleled wickedness and disloyalty, which had already subjected, and would still subject them to calamities and misery. He concludes with a pathetic address, exhorting them to return to him, with an implied promise of acceptance; and laments the necessity he was under, through their continued obstinacy, of giving them further marks of his displeasure.

Let our minds be impressed with the great difficulty of conquering bad habits. It is a thing next to impossible. Hardly any principles of religion, any motives, either of fear or shame, will work upon those who are accustomed to do evil. Fact and experience prove this. Let us be thankful if through the pious care of parents, and divine grace, we have

never contracted them. Young people should, above all things, guard against them; and parents watch over their children to prevent them. Nothing is impossible to divine grace and power. Let those therefore who are under the power of them, earnestly strive and pray against them, and do it without delay, lest the disease should become incurable.

CHAP. CXLV.

Jeremiah sent to call the Jews to Repentance. From the seventh Chapter of the Book of Jeremiah. B. C. 606.

THE word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord are these.

For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt; then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt, unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck; they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.

But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction : truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing can avert the ruin of those who persist in disobedience; and we understand the gospel as little as the Jews did the law, if we think that a notional belief and high confidence that we are the people of God, can avail those who persist in rebellion; or that he will accept any particular actions or services, which are intended as compensation for continuing in the practice of some beloved iniquity. The way is indeed opened for the sinner to return, and when we are brought to obey the gospel, all former offences are pardoned, imperfect services are accepted, the Lord becomes our God, and numbers us among his people. We learn to walk in his ways, and it is well with us; his gospel furnishes us with motives, encouragements, and assistance; and his ordinances are means of grace to our souls. But he abhors external services when men continue to follow their own counsels, to walk after their own evil imaginations, and when they grow worse in the midst of opportunities of improvement.

CHAP. CXLVI.

Jeremiah's deep Lamentation over the wretched Condition of the Jews. From the eighth and ninth Chapters of the Book of Jeremiah. B. C. 606.

WHEN I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and

they know not me, saith the Lord. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak he truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? Their tongue speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.

Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone. And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.

Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through? And the Lord saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein, but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Ba'alim, which their fathers taught them: therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Let us all in good earnest make it our great business to serve God, to study to know his will, and to do it when we know it, and then we are

safe. Let us be persuaded presently to forsake our sinful courses and entirely to resign up ourselves to the divine government, and then we shall be secure of the divine protection and special Providence over us. Then we may let loose the reins of our hope and confidence in God, and trust his gracious Providence as much as we can, and we shall never be confounded. God will lead us by a most gracious economy through this vale of tears, the whole course of our pilgrimage in this world; directing us in all difficulties, comforting us in all sorrows and distresses, blessing all earthly enjoyments that he gives us, and supplying the want of those that he thinks fit to deny us with greater blessings, and in the life to come he will pour out the full riches of his grace and goodness on us.

CHAP. CXLVII.

The Captivity of Judah predicted. From the seventeenth Chapter of Jeremiah.
B. C. 605.

THE sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars; whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills. O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil, and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders. And thou, even thyself, shall discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn for ever.

Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the

earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise.

Thus saith the Lord unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; and say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord: Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day; neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.

And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of the city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though men violate the commands of God without much reflection; yet every sin is marked in his book as with an iron pen; yea, they are all so graven upon the table of the heart, that they will be readily recognized by every man's conscience in the great day of retribution. Indeed, conscience frequently now reproaches the transgressor with his crimes, when he will not yield to conviction, but, as much as possible, imposes silence on the friendly monitor, and rushes into further sins. What cause then have we to beg of God continually to search, and prove, and keep us, and not suffer us to be deceived by our own hearts; and to create in us a clean and holy nature by his Spirit! How zealous should we be of ourselves, distrustful of ourselves, and suspicious of our own judgment in our own cause, or where our prejudices or interests are concerned! How thankful should we be for restraints (even by poverty, pain, or sickness) from acting out all that is in our hearts, to the misery and ruin, temporal and eternal, of ourselves and others! How thankful should we be for the salvation of Christ! and how patient under every

trial that we meet with from the hand of God, or from the wickedness of our fellow-sinners!

CHAP. CXLVIII.

Exhortation to Obedience, Judgment upon Jehoiakim, and the Doom of Coniah, and others of David's family. From the twenty-second Chapter of Jeremiah. B. C. 590.

Thus saith the Lord; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he and his servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear these words, saith the Lord, this house shall become a desolation.

Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: Was not this to know me? saith the Lord. But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother! or, Ah, sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, lord! or, Ah, his glory! He shall be drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

As I live, saith the Lord, though Coni'ah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; and I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon,

and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. But to the land wherunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. Is this man Coni'ah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is unspeakably more respectable and comfortable to have food and raiment, and other accommodations in a plain style, with honesty and piety, and to use hospitality, to be friendly to the poor, and to have an interest in their prayers; than to fare sumptuously, to lodge magnificently, to be surrounded with numerous servants and visitants, whilst extravagance puts an edge on rapacity, and the eyes and heart are only after covetousness, oppression, and other crimes, which luxury renders necessary.

It is no improper reflection which may be drawn from the denunciations contained in this chapter, and from the subsequent accomplishment of them, that if the crimes here threatened with special judgments, such as oppression and violence, fraud and extortion, covetousness and injustice, have destroyed the thrones and families of the mightiest princes; how shall sinners and oppressors of inferior quality expect to escape the punishments denounced against all such violations of the Divine law?

CHAP. CXLIX.

Jeremiah mourns over the Desolations of Jerusalem and the Miseries of its Inhabitants.
From the first and second Chapters of the Book of Lamentations. B. C. 588.

How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest.

The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn

feasts : all her gates are desolate, her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness. From the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old. Jerusalem hath grievously sinned ; therefore she is removed : all that honoured her despise her. She remembereth not her last end ; therefore she came down wonderfully : she had no comforter.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. He hath made me desolate and faint all the day. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand : he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up. For these things I weep : mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me : my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.

Behold, O Lord ; for I am in distress : mine heart is turned within me ; for I have grievously rebelled : abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death. They have heard that I sigh : there is none to comfort me : all mine enemies have heard of my trouble : they are glad that thou hast done it.

How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth, the beauty of Israel ! The Lord was as an enemy : he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces : he hath increased in the daughter of Judah inourning and lamentation. The Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest. Her gates are sunk into the ground ; he hath destroyed and broken her bars : her king and her princes are among the Gentiles : the law is no more : her prophets also find no vision from the Lord. The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence : they have cast up dust upon their heads ; they have girded themselves with sackcloth : the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.

Mine eyes do fail with tears, for the destruction of the daughter of my people. What thing shall I take to witness for thee ? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem ? What shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O daughter of Zion ? for thy breach is great like the sea : who can heal thee ? All that pass by clap their hands at thee ; they hiss and wag their head at

the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call the Perfection of beauty, the Joy of the whole earth?

The Lord hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries. Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease. Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands towards him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets; my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the Lord's anger none escaped nor remained: those that I brought up, hath mine enemy consumed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Call to mind the occasion of this elegy: Jerusalem besieged, wasted with famine, taken, pillaged, and laid in ruins: the stones thereof stained with the blood of her infants; the glorious temple of Solomon demolished, and its sacred utensils borne off in triumph by an implacable enemy: the princes and nobles of Judah put to an ignominious death; the virgin daughters of Jerusalem subjected to the unbridled appetite of a brutal soldiery: the flower of the nation led away captive into a foreign land: and there suffering all the buffetings and insults, all the contempt and mockery, of the basest servitude.

Call to mind also, that the writer of this divine piece was an eye-witness of those distressing scenes, and an eminent sufferer in that dreadful catastrophe; and then read the artless, but exquisitely pathetic and moving description of the aforementioned events; and if you have a heart that can "feel another's wo," that heart must be touched and deeply affected.

CHAP. CL.

The Prophet bewails his Calamities, and acknowledges the Mercy of God and the Benefit of Afflictions. From the third Chapter of the Book of Lamentations. B. C. 588.

I AM the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.

Surely against me is he turned : he turneth his hand against me all the day. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old. He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out : he hath made my chain heavy.

Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins. I was a derision to all my people : and their song all the day. He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with worm-wood.

And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace : I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord : remembering mine affliction and my misery, the worm-wood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning : great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul ; therefore will I hope in him.

The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust ; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him : he is filled full with reproach.

For the Lord will not cast off for ever : But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not.

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not ? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good ? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins ? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled : thou hast not pardoned. Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us : thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer

should not pass through. Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction. Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people. Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not without any intermission, till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven. Mine eye affecteth mine heart, because of all the daughters of my city.



JEREMIAH IN THE DUNGEON.

I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not. O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Happy shall we all be, if we so learn to receive affliction, considering that it is laid upon us by the hand of God, as to extract good out of it. In order to this, we must abase ourselves before him in the deepest humiliation; and then, whatever reproach or injurious treatment we receive, we shall be conscious that we have no cause to complain whilst we have the hopes of his favour, and are thus made partakers of his holiness. This submission and dependance on God, must be safe and advantageous; for he will not cast off for ever any who trust in him. Though he cause grief, he delighteth in mercy, and not in afflicting the children of men;

and when he hath humbled and proved us, he will have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies, and do us good at the latter end.

Our troubles are all from him: and when our peace is made with him, all things will certainly work together for our good. Instead then of fretting and complaining when we suffer a small part of the punishment due to our sins; whilst continuance of life gives ground for hope and time for prayer; we should employ ourselves in searching and trying our ways, in repenting of our sins and returning unto the Lord, and in lifting up our hearts and prayers unto our heavenly Father. We should complain to him and not of him, and the representation of our sorrows should be always accompanied with humble confessions of our transgressions.

CHAP. CLI.

The Prophet deplores the Ruin of the City and Temple; and the extreme Misery of the People, especially by Famine; and earnestly prays to God to return to them in Mercy. From the fourth and fifth Chapters of Lamentations. B. C. 588.

How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them. For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire: their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick.

They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field. The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows. Our necks are under persecution: we labor and have no rest. Our fathers have sinned, and are not: and we have

borne their iniquities. Servants have ruled over us: there is none that doth deliver us out of their hand. We gat our bread with the peril of our lives because of the sword of the wilderness. Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine.

The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our head: wo unto us, that we have sinned! For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim. Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it. Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation. Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Various tribulations may make our hearts faint and our eyes dim: but our way to the mercy seat of God still is open; and we may beseech him not to forsake or forget us: and plead with him to turn, and renew us more and more by his grace; that our hopes may revive and our consolations abound, as in the days of old. Let us then, in all our troubles, put our whole trust and confidence in his mercy; let us confess our sins, and pour out our hearts before him; and let us watch against repinings, or despondency, whatever we suffer or witness of the troubles of our brethren; for this we surely know, that it shall be well in the event with all who trust, fear, love, and serve the Lord.

It is to be observed, that though the Babylonians had reduced the Jews to their present deplorable condition, yet the prophet attributes all these misfortunes to God; and says, that it was God himself who had cast off his people, and delivered his temple, his altars, and his city, into the hands of the idolaters. The enemies of the Jews could not have hurt them, if God had not withdrawn his protection from the people that he had chosen. God is the dispenser of afflictions to mankind: but in his Church particularly, nothing happens without his will. It is also to be considered, that, when God thus exposes his Church to sufferings, he does not design to destroy it, but only to reform and purify it by his corrections. And the same judgment should be passed on all evils which befall men in this life.

CHAP. CLII.

The Parable of the Grapes, and God's Justice and Righteousness Vindicated. From the eighteenth Chapter of Ezekiel. B. C. 593.

THE word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying,

The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God.

Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live?

But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committed iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them—for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways un-

equal? therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The chief intention of this chapter, is to show that God's dealings with mankind, especially as to their condition in another life, would be regulated by the good or ill behaviour of each individual: it being the invariable rule of his providence, that punishment should follow guilt, and happiness be the reward of innocence. There was, it seems, a proverb, or common saying among the Jews, which implied a censure upon the justice of God, as if the calamities which befel the present generation were inflicted on them merely for the sins of their forefathers. God is pleased therefore to declare here, that however children may be involved, in respect to this world, in the consequence of their parents' guilt, impartial justice would ever be the rule of his conduct: temporal death was the declared punishment of sin to every man; and without repentance, eternal death would follow.

The proper act of God is to call and invite us by his word and Holy Spirit, and then accept our endeavours when we turn to him. But this conversion must be total and sincere, it must be a turning from all—a casting away from us all our transgressions. This is our part: but to make a new heart, and a new spirit, is indeed quite out of the reach of nature; it is the work of God alone; and therefore most properly called by the apostle a new creation, and the new creature; it being such a thorough change of heart and principles as can be effected only by the same Divine power that created the world and raised Christ from the dead. But although it be done by the same Almighty power, it is not done after the same manner; by an irresistible immediate act of omnipotence. It is made by means and motives, by the word and grace of God, man consenting and co-operating therewith. Wherefore though God is pleased to command us to make us new hearts, and new spirits, it behoves us to refer that whole work, as well as ascribe the whole glory of the change to him. When he bids us turn, let us, in an humble, a conscientious sense of our weakness and insufficiency, say again, "Turn thou us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned."

CHAP. CLIII.

God refuseth to consult the Elders of Israel ; rehearses their rebellious Conduct ; and promises to gather them under the Gospel. From the twentieth Chapter of Ezekiel. B. C. 594.

AND it came to pass that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and sat before me. Then came the word of the Lord unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God ; Are ye come to inquire of me ? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God : In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, saying, I am the Lord your God ; in the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands ; then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt : I am the Lord your God.

But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me : they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt : then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness : they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall even live in them ; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted : then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out. Mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

I said also unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols : I am the Lord your God ; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them : And hallow my sabbaths ; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God. Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against me : they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them : they polluted my sabbaths : then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness ; that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord.

Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God : Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me. Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God : Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers ? For when ye offer your gifts ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day : and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel ? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.

Yet, saith the Lord God, I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, and I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. I will bring you into the bond of the covenant : and I will purge out from among you them that transgress against me : I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel : and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God ; in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, shall all the house of Israel serve me : there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered ; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Egypt, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings wherein you have been defiled ;

and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The threatenings which are pronounced against the Jews in this chapter should act as a warning to all who read it. God had given them a law which was *holy, just, and good*; but their disobedience and want of faith, converted into a curse what was intended for a blessing. On us also has God bestowed a still more valuable blessing, even the promise of redemption and sanctification through Christ Jesus. But in order to attain this blessing, certain conditions must be fulfilled: we also must walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and hallow his Sabbaths. If we examine our hearts and our lives, it will but too plainly appear how greatly we have failed in fulfilling our part of this holy covenant. Let us then earnestly entreat the Lord to pardon our innumerable transgressions, and to loathe ourselves in our own sight for all the evils that we have committed. So shall we escape the heavy vengeance with which we are threatened, the mercy of God will pardon our past backslidings, and our perseverance in a righteous cause will, through the mercies of our Redeemer, entitle us to a share in that heavenly Canaan, of which a land flowing with milk and honey gives but a faint resemblance.

CHAP. CLIV.

The Prophet instructed in the Duties of his Office, as the Watchman of Israel; God showeth the Justice of his Ways towards the Penitent, and towards the Revolters; also the Hypocrisy of those who came to hear his Word without doing it. From the thirty-third Chapter of Ezekiel. B. C. 587.

AGAIN the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from

among them, he is taken away in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die ; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it : if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel ; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live ? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live ; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ? Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression : and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness.

Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument ; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The comparison of a sentinel, or watchman, whereby God represents the duties of Ezekiel's office, shows with what fidelity the pastors of the church ought to warn sinners, and labour with their utmost strength to recover them from the error of their ways, if they would not be responsible for the ruin of their souls ; and it likewise proves, that if sinners do not amend when they are so warned, their destruction will be just. We have here one of the most express declarations of the infinite mercy of God that is to be found in the whole Scripture. God swears by himself, that he would not, by any means, wish the death of the wicked ; that he desires nothing but their conversion and life, and receives them

graciously, as soon as they return to him. The consideration of God's great mercy should fill sinners with confidence and engage them to repent, and thereby prevent their ruin. Ezekiel teaches us, that God has no respect in his judgment, but to the good and evil which every man has done; and that as sinners who change their course of life shall obtain mercy, so likewise the righteous, if they forsake their righteousness, shall die in their sin. What God says in so clear and express a manner on this head, sets his unbounded goodness towards men in a clear light, as well as his unspotted justice; and this doctrine ought to stop the mouths of hardened sinners, and to inspire good men with wholesome fear.

CHAP. CLV.

The Rejection and Restoration of Israel, and the Blessings of Christ's Kingdom. From the thirty-sixth Chapter of Ezekiel. B. C. 587

MOREOVER the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land.

But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my

spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it.

Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts: so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The promise God here makes of restoring, protecting, and sanctifying his people, is not confined to the deliverance of the Jews, and to the temporal blessings vouchsafed them in their land after their return from Babylon: it agrees more especially to the spiritual blessings that God was to bestow, first on the Jews, and afterward on all men, in the times of the Messiah; and was accomplished by the coming of Jesus Christ, the sending of the Holy Ghost, and by the preaching of the Gospel. What we are chiefly to consider in these promises is, that the design of God in granting us these blessings, was to withdraw men from sins, to sanctify them, and to give them a new heart and a new spirit, that they might walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments. This then is what we ought chiefly to labour after; this is the end to which we should apply the mercies which God vouchsafes us by the new covenant, under which we have the happiness to live.

CHAP. CLVI.

The Vision of the Resurrection of the Dry Bones of the Valley. From the thirty-seventh Chapter of Ezekiel. B. C. 586.

THE hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley: and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? and I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This vision of Ezekiel, in which God showed him dead bodies raised to life, tended to instruct the Jews, that though they were in a very deplor-

able condition, and there seemed to be no hopes of their recovery, yet God, by his infinite power, would infallibly deliver them. From whence we may gather, that nothing is impossible with God, and that he never wants means to accomplish his promises. This vision is likewise to be considered as a most express type of the general resurrection. Though our bodies are reduced to dust, God is able to give them life again, and reunite them to our souls; which he will infallibly do at the last day, as we are most clearly taught in the gospel.

This vision should also comfort us when religion is at the lowest ebb, and circumstances are most discouraging. What was more unlikely than a resurrection of dry bones? and what a more evident proof of divine power? By that, therefore, God would represent the recovery of Israel; and thus can he raise dead souls to life. Ministers only prophesy to them; God must command the spirit of life to enter into them. He can raise his own cause when human wisdom, piety, and zeal are sunk to their lowest point; if he exerts his own power, the most wonderful effects will be produced. When there seems to be nothing but spiritual death upon his churches, he can revive them; for all things are of God. The consideration of this should support our faith and hope, and animate our prayers that he would revive his work in his own proper time.

CHAP. CLVII.

Miraculous Escape of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, from the fiery Furnace.
From the third Chapter of Daniel. B. C. 603.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR the king made an image of gold, and he set it up in the province of Babylon. Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man shall fall down and worship the golden image: and whoso falleth not down and worshipeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it

known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake and said, Ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be God, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Of what were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego accused to Nebuchadnezzar?—What did they reply to him?—What was done with them?—What induced him to have them released?—What decree did the king then make?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord can render every furnace of affliction, and the bed of death, nay, the rack or the flames, the scene of sweet communion betwixt him and his people. Their sufferings only tend to loosen their bonds, and set them at liberty from sin and the world: they may be comfortable in any situation, by the manifested presence of the Son of God; and this may

be so evident, as even to fill their persecutors with astonishment and dismay. The Lord can convince the most proud that he is above them, and show them the madness and folly of their rebellion. He will effectually cause the wrath of man to turn to his praise, and restrain the remainder of it: he can extort adoration even from his enemies, and make all men see how wise, safe, and happy they are, who adhere to his service in seasons of peculiar danger and difficulty. He can make those instrumental in stopping the mouths of blasphemers, and in promoting the knowledge of his great name, who have no real love to him; and he can render the sufferings of his people conducive to their temporal, as well as eternal good. "O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man who putteth his trust in thee!" Finally, let us remember, that he who preserved these pious Jews in the fiery furnace, is able to uphold us in the hour of sharp temptation, to keep us from falling into sin, in the most unfavourable circumstances, and to "present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

CHAP. CLVIII.

Belshazzar's impious Feast; and he is admonished of approaching Ruin by a Miracle.
 From the fifth Chapter of Daniel. B. C. 538.

BELSHAZZAR the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem. Then they brought the golden vessels; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his

lords came into the banquet house : and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever : let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed : there is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods ; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him ; forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar ; now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.

Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry ? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. Then Daniel answered and said, O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour : and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him ; and he was driven from the sons of men ; and his heart was made like the beasts, and they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven ; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this ; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven ; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them ; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know : and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing : MENE ; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL ; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES ; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In

that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is said in this chapter of the holy vessels taken from the temple? —What took place at the feast to trouble the king?—Who directed his attention to Daniel for an interpretation of the writing?—What was the writing?—What was the interpretation of it?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Daniel reproached the king for not making a better use of the judgments with which God had chastised his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar; for persisting in his pride, and setting himself against God, by profaning the vessels of the temple of Jerusalem, and praising his idols instead of giving glory to God. This is a visible proof of the divine vengeance on those whose heart is lifted up with prosperity; on the profane and ungodly, who, instead of reverencing him from whom they receive life, and breath, and all things, have the insolence to exalt themselves against him; and on those who do not improve the warnings he gives them, the afflictions he visits them with, nor the examples he sets before their eyes. Lastly, the death of Belshazzar, and ruin of the Babylonish empire, which then passed to the Medes and Persians, is an event the most remarkable, as it had been foretold, not only by David, but by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets, who had expressly declared that Babylon should be taken in the night, while the king and the princes were rejoicing, which is also confirmed by the writers of profane history.

CHAP. CLIX.

Conspiracy against Daniel. He is cast into the Den of Lions, but is delivered in Safety, while his Enemies are destroyed. From the sixth Chapter of Daniel. B. C. 537.

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled to-

gether to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. When the king heard these words, he was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. But these men said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree or statute which the king establisheth may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions'

mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den; so Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. Moreover king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How many princes did Darius set over the kingdom?—Why did the presidents and princes conspire against Daniel?—What decree did the king make?—What did Daniel do, on knowing of this decree?—What did the king say to him when he was cast into the den of lions?—What was done with the accusers of Daniel?—What decree did the king then make?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The first thing to be observed in this chapter, is the dreadful consequence of envy and jealousy; those who are guilty of them suffer grievously themselves from the indulgence of such malignant passions, and are led by them to the commission of such sins as bring on their own ruin as well as that of others. Let us carefully guard against this horrid disposition, learning to be content with the condition in which God has placed us, and not grudging the superior advancement or happiness of others. Secondly, we may remark the goodness of God in rewarding the fidelity of his servants. In this chequered life we are liable to severe afflictions, and sometimes to cruel persecutions for righteousness' sake. Let us, however, not be weary in well-doing, nor faint under tribulations as those who have no hope; but putting our whole confidence in God, let us patiently endure when we suffer wrongfully, and trust in his mercy to bring us out of the fiery furnace of affliction.

 CHAP. CLX.

Daniel's Confession and Prayer, and the Time of Christ's Advent foretold. From the ninth Chapter of Daniel. B. C. 538.

IN the first year of Darius, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, I Daniel set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are

near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil; for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth

of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks : the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself : and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary ; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week : and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This prophecy of the seventy weeks, is one of the most express prophecies in all the Old Testament : it clearly determines the time that was to pass between the decree for rebuilding Jerusalem, and the death of the Messiah. The angel who spake to Daniel says the time was to be four hundred and ninety years, to be reckoned from the decree made in favour of the Jews by Artaxerxes, surnamed Longimanus. This prophecy expressly declares, that at the end of this term the Messiah should come ; that he would make an atonement for sin by his death ; that he would establish and confirm the covenant of God with men ; and that afterwards the Romans should come and destroy the city and temple of Jerusalem. All these things have been exactly fulfilled, at the time and in the manner foretold, as we are most certainly informed by history. Thus we have in this prophecy an immovable support of our faith, as it proves, beyond contradiction, the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the truth of the Christian religion ; showing, in the clearest manner, that Jesus is the promised Messiah, who has redeemed us by his death ; and strongly engaging us to believe in him as our Saviour, and to submit to the doctrines which he preached.

CHAP. CLXI.

God's terrible Judgments ; an Exhortation to Repentance ; a Fast prescribed ; and Zion comforted with a promise of future Blessing. From the second Chapter of Joel. B. C. 800.

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain : let all the inhabitants of the land tremble : for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand ; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains : a great people and a strong ;

there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks.

Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat-offering and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children; let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people:

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pas-

tures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The priests were directed to blow the trumpets at the temple; and to alarm the people who assembled, with the prospect of the near approach of these judgments; that the report might thence be diffused throughout the whole land, and all the inhabitants might tremble at God's word, and be induced to repent and deprecate his displeasure. If the approaching temporal judgments that were coming on Israel, required such an earnest exhortation to repentance, how much more should we be induced to fly from those eternal judgments which await the finally impenitent!

Let us especially rejoice on the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and pray that we may be partakers of his gracious influences. It was at first miraculously poured out on the Apostles, and through them, on all the disciples, young and old, male and female, rich and poor; and this contributed much to the spread and establishment of the gospel. We also have encouragement to hope for the same Spirit, though not in so extraordinary a manner, if we call upon the name of the Lord with humble faith and in the practice of evangelical obedience. Even the servant and handmaid may have a supply of this Spirit if they earnestly seek it. And by this shall we all be led to holiness here, and to complete and everlasting happiness in the new Jerusalem above.

CHAP. CLXII.

The Prophet Jonah directed to go and reprove Nineveh ; through Fear he attempts going to Tarshish, but in consequence of his Disobedience is thrown into the Sea, and is swallowed by a Fish ; his Prayer and Deliverance. From the first and second Chapters of Jonah. B. C. 862.

Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it ; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa ; and he found a ship going to Tarshish : so he went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship ; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the ship-master came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper ? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us. What is thine occupation ? and whence comest thou ? What is thy country ? and of what people art thou ? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew ; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this ? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us ? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea ; so shall the sea be calm unto you ; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring it to the land ; but they could not : for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood : for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.

So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea ; and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was Jonah directed to do?—Why did he decline doing it?—Where did he attempt going?—What was the cause of his attempting to go to Tarshish?—What then became of him?—How long did he remain in the fish?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How much need have we to guard our hearts, lest we disobey the commands of God. Jonah fled to avoid the execution of his orders, and terrible means were used to bring him back. His disobedience was indeed peculiarly inexcusable, considering his knowledge of God, the discoveries made to him, and the honour conferred upon him. The heathen sailors justly reproached him. Let us then reverence the authority of God, and cheerfully obey all his commands; not fearing any consequences while engaged in his work.

From this chapter we may also infer the importance and necessity of prayer. Happy was it for Jonah that he had been used to this duty. We cannot be in any place where we are excluded from the mercy-seat of God; and sharp afflictions are often sent to excite those to earnest cries for mercy, who were negligent in prosperity, and under the rebukes of his word. The hand of God should be acknowledged in all our troubles—a proper estimate should be formed of the greatness of our difficulties, and the urgency of our distresses; in order that our faith may be fixed more simply upon the power of the Lord for deliverance, and that afterwards we may be duly sensible of our obligations—and we should endeavour to attain a proper sense of the greatness of our guilt, that we may more value his mercy and salvation.

CHAP. CLXIII.

Jonah again sent to the Ninevites ; and, upon their Repentance, God spareth them.

From the third Chapter of Jonah. B. C. 862.

AND the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was

an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How many days' journey was Nineveh?—What did Jonah say to the inhabitants?—What did they then do?—What was the consequence of their fasting and repentance?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If idolaters, at the call of an Israelitish prophet, were thus earnest, fervent, prompt, self-denying, and humble in seeking mercy; how inexcusable will professed Christians be, who, notwithstanding all the warnings, instructions, invitations, and promises of Scripture, persist in unbelief, impenitence, self-indulgence, and procrastination! But if God so readily pardoned the inhabitants of this great city, where it may be apprehended the greater part were only transiently impressed and partially reformed—how readily will he pardon the broken-hearted penitent, and the believing supplicant at his mercy-seat! We may also here see the blessed effects of the resurrection of Christ, and the consequent preaching of his gospel, in the conversion and salvation of the Gentiles; and let Christians pray that this preaching and these effects may pervade the whole world.

CHAP. CLXIV.

The Majesty of God, his Love to his People, and his Severity to his Enemies. From the first Chapter of Nahum. B. C. 710.

THE burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum. God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and

is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. What do ye imagine against the Lord? He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor.

Thus saith the Lord; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder. And the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave: for thou art vile. Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

From the awful description which is here given of the power and wrath of this almighty and terrible Being, we should be led to reverence and adore him. *Who can stand before his indignation?* When he determines to punish and destroy, what is great Nineveh, and the vast Assyrian empire? What is any man, or kingdom, before him? Let us stand in awe, therefore, and not sin. But while we fear his power and justice, let us remember, that he is not revengeful and passionate, but Lord of his anger; it is always under his control; and always just and right. His almighty power is continually employed for the security and supply of those that trust in him: his goodness shall never forsake his servants.

CHAP. CLXV.

Habakkuk prays God to revive his Work ; commemorates the Displays of the Divine Glory ; manifests how deeply affected he is by the Prospect of approaching Judgments ; but resolves to rejoice in God when all other Comforts failed. From the third Chapter of Habakkuk. B. C. 609.

A PRAYER of Habakkuk the prophet. O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid : O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known : in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light ; he had horns coming out of his hand ; and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth : he beheld, and drove asunder the nations ; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow : his ways are everlasting.

I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction : and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers ? was thine anger against the rivers ? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses, and thy chariots of salvation ? Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains saw thee, and they trembled : the overflowing of the water passed by : the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation : at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed ; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages : they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me : their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters. When I heard, my lips quivered at the voice ; rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble. When he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

See of how much importance it is that we recollect and make familiar to our minds the perfections of God, and his appearances for his people. The prophet here reviews God's ancient and wonderful works in favour of his people, and describes them in most sublime poetical language, to impress the hearts of his degenerate people. And it is proper that we should consider these things, that we may have a deep conviction of the providence and power of Jehovah; that all nature and its elements are under his command; that he can easily confound all his enemies, and save his people in the most distressing circumstances. He is God above all gods; let us learn to reverence and adore him, who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. When we recollect what God did for his ancient people, it should lead us to pray and hope that he will *revive his work*. Let us earnestly pray that God would support religion; that he would quicken the spirits of his faithful servants; comfort them under persecution and oppression, and make them zealous in every good word and work.

CHAP. CLXVI.

An Introduction to the History of Jesus Christ. From the first Chapter of St. John's Gospel.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We see that the end for which Christ came into the world, was, to be the light of the world, to enlighten mankind with the knowledge of God, and to purchase for them that receive him and believe in him, the right of becoming his children. Let us then admire and adore the infinite love and goodness of God in this astonishing condescension, that he who was one with the Father, and of the same divine nature with him, should stoop so low, as to assume our human nature, with all its weaknesses and infirmities, for us men and for our salvation. Let us contemplate the infinite power and unsearchable riches of divine wisdom in this transaction, that God should find out a way to reconcile sinners to himself, receiving satisfaction in the same nature that offended: by which means justice and mercy met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

CHAP. CLXVII.

Miracles attending the Birth of Jesus Christ. From the first Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.

THERE was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, and they both were now well stricken in years.

And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense.

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias : for thy prayer is heard ; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink ; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this ? And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God : and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them : and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple ; for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

And in the sixth month [from that time,] the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David ; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name **JESUS**. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest ; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden : for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Now Elisabeth brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her: and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. Then they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.



THE ANNUNCIATION.

Then fear came on all that dwelt round about them; and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea. And all they that had heard them, laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of Child shall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David: as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be

saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called, The prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who was the king of Judea, when Zacharias was priest?—What communication was made to him by an angel when he was burning incense?—How long after that time did the angel appear to Mary?—What miracle was wrought upon Zacharias to prove the truth of the angel's declaration to him?—When was he released from being made dumb?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst we contemplate the peculiar honour that was conferred on the mother of our Lord, we should remember that angels rejoice over every sinner that repenteth; they deem those highly favoured in whose hearts Christ dwelleth by faith, and are ready to congratulate each believer on so important a blessing. Happy indeed must they be, among the sons and daughters of Adam, to whom the Lord is graciously reconciled, and with whom he is present by his sanctifying Spirit. They may indeed be troubled and perplexed by many things which they read and hear; and they can scarcely raise their hopes so high, as to expect the blessings intended for them; but they shall, in due season, be raised above their fears, assured that they have found favour with God, as most nearly related to the Saviour of the world. Let us then rejoice in his personal and mediatorial exaltation; for he now reigns not only over the house of Jacob, but over angels, principalities, and powers in heavenly places, as the Son of God and the son of David. Let us seek to be, and to approve ourselves, the subjects of his kingdom, of which there shall be no end; and if we meet with sufferings in the way to the full enjoyment of our privileges and felicity; let us remember how Jesus was abased, impoverished, reproached, rejected and crucified, before he entered into his glory.

CHAP. CLXVIII.

Birth of Jesus Christ ; the Angels announce it to the Shepherds ; his Circumcision, and Presentation in the Temple. From the second Chapter of Luke. A. M. 4001.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed ; and all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem ; (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife. And so it was, that while they were there, she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger ; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them ; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you ; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all they that heard it, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel. And when the days according to the law of Moses

were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; and behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in at that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What caused Joseph and Mary to go into the city of David?—How was the birth of Christ made known to the shepherds?—When was he brought to Jerusalem?—Who took him into his arms and blessed Joseph and Mary?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our blessed Lord brought "peace on earth," not only in a spiritual sense, by reconciling man to his offended Maker, and thus imparting to him true content, and peace, and satisfaction of mind, but also in a temporal sense. That benevolence of disposition, and gentleness of behaviour, which he so constantly and so warmly recommended, both by his doctrine and by his example, were entirely calculated to promote the peace and harmony of mankind, and to knit them together in one common bond of love and affection. If ever peace was made visible in outward form, it was in the person of our blessed Lord. His whole life and conversation was one uniform representation of it, insomuch that it might even in this sense be affirmed of him, that of his peace there was no end.

CHAP. CLXIX.

The Eastern Magi are directed to Christ ; Joseph with Jesus and his Mother go into Egypt ; Herod destroys the young Children—his Death ; Christ is brought back again to Nazareth. From the second Chapter of Matthew.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea : for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda : for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young Child : and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed ; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word ; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt : and was there until the death of Herod : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men,

was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young Child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young Child's life. And he arose, and took the young Child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archela'us did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee; and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who came to Herod and inquired where Jesus was born?—By what means were they directed to Christ?—What did they do on finding him?—What method did Herod adopt to destroy Christ?—How was his escape effected?—Why did he dwell in Nazareth?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The homage which these wise men of the east paid to the Child Jesus, falling down before him, and presenting unto them their gifts, should excite us, who know he is our Lord and our Saviour, to worship him, love and praise him, and to devote to him all that is in our power. We see in the behaviour of Herod towards the wise men, and in the massacre which he made of the children of Bethlehem, the craft and cruelty of that prince, who neglected no possible means to destroy the Child Jesus: and thus was our Lord exposed, even from his birth, to great perils; which showed, from the very first, that his kingdom was not of this world, and that he was born to suffer. We likewise see that God, by the warning which he gave to the wise men, and afterward to Joseph, defeated Herod's designs; and that all the measures which that unjust and cruel prince had taken to destroy Jesus, as effectual as he thought them, and as they appeared to be, could not procure our Lord's death, nor prevent his returning into Judea, where he afterward exercised his ministry. All these events may convince us that Providence did direct, in a particular manner, all that happened to Jesus Christ, and that the utmost endeavours of men can never hinder the execution of what God has purposed, nor hurt those whom he protects.

CHAP. CLXX.

Jesus goes to the Passover at Jerusalem, when he is twelve years old. From the second Chapter of St. Luke. A. D. 8.

AND the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

BRIEF REVIEW.

How often did the parents of Jesus go to the temple?—At what age did he go?—With what disappointment did they meet on leaving the temple?—How was he employed when they found him?—What did he say to them?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are informed that the ordinances and temple of God were the chief delight of Jesus; and that in Jerusalem nothing so much attracted his attention, as the instructions of the public teachers of the divine law. These things we ought to deem most worthy of our regard: in these we should find our chief satisfaction; thus young persons should employ their early days, seeking the knowledge of divine truth, attending on the ministry of the Gospel, proposing such inquiries to their seniors and instructors, as may tend to the increase of knowledge; and studying to be able with pertinency and propriety to answer such questions as may be

put to them. From the earliest youth, every one should deem the service of God his great business: and the glory of his name and the duty owing to him, must be allowed a pre-eminence, even above that of children to their parents, and must be attended to, even when it interferes with their inclination and satisfaction. In all things else the blessed Saviour hath left an example to young persons, of unreserved subjection, not only to their own parents, but even to those who are by any means intrusted with a kind of parental authority; and he hath also taught them patient industry and contentment in a mean condition. These, when connected with piety and humility, are proper evidences of an increase of true wisdom, and of having obtained favour with God: and they have a tendency to render the possessor dear to his fellow creatures also; especially to those who most deserve estimation, and whose friendship is a privilege. Let us then endeavour to keep the sayings of Jesus in our hearts, and to transcribe his example in our lives.

CHAP. CLXXI.

The Life and Ministry of John the Baptist. From the third Chapter of St. Luke and the third and fourteenth Chapters of St. Matthew.

AND the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Now in the fifteenth year of Tiberias Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low. And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

A. M. 4030.

A. D. 26.

And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise

up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then ? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none : and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do ? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do ? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.

And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not ; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water ; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire : whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner ; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water ; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And many other things in his exhortation, preached he unto the people. But Herod the tetrarch had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

And the king was sorry : nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given

her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who was governor of Judea, when John began his ministry?—Where did he baptize?—What miracle was wrought when Jesus was baptized by John?—For what was John put in prison?—How came he to be put to death?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What an exalted idea does it give us of the dignity and importance of the great Founder of our religion, that he should have such a forerunner and harbinger as John to proclaim his approach to the world, and call upon mankind to attend to him. It was a distinction peculiar and appropriate to him. Neither Moses nor any of the prophets had this mark of honour. It was reserved for the Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, and was well suited to the transcendent dignity of his person and the grandeur of his design.

From the preaching of John the Baptist, we may learn, that repentance and holiness of life, is a qualification without which no one can be the disciple of Jesus Christ, nor enter into the kingdom of God. It likewise informs us, that as the unbelieving Jews vainly boasted they were the children of Abraham, it is no advantage to hypocrites to be externally in covenant with God; that Jesus Christ knows them, and that he will one day cleanse his Church by casting the wicked into everlasting punishment, and by receiving the true believers into his heavenly kingdom.

CHAP. CLXXII.

John's Testimony concerning Jesus, in Reply to the Inquiries of the Priests and Levites; and Christ's Conversation with Nathanael. From the first Chapter of John's Gospel.

AND this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you whom ye know not: he it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethab'ara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias; which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas: which is, by interpretation, a stone.

The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an

Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile ! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me ? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God ; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did the priests and Levites ask John ?—What did the two disciples who heard Jesus speak say unto him ?—What did Philip say to Nathanael ?—What was Nathanael's reply ?—What did Jesus first say to Nathanael ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile ! A man truly pious and conscientious will consider that guile is not more odious in the esteem of men than it is abominable in the sight of God, and must be one day accounted for before the high and awful tribunal. While he reflects hereupon, and at the same time loves his own soul, he will be sensible that it is not only his duty, but his real and lasting interest, to act always a just, and equal, and generous part with all mankind. He will see good reason for loving his neighbour in like manner as he loves himself, and so of course will be inclined to deal with others as he desires to be dealt with. He will be true and faithful in all measures, whether transacted in secret or in face of the sun. He will take no unfair advantages of the weakness of one, or of the ignorance of another, or of the necessities of a third, or of any other unhappy circumstances or contingencies. He will be equal and impartial in all his dealings, though it were towards an idiot or an infant, or any thoughtless, helpless person, as well as towards the sharpest, and shrewdest, and greatest, of whose capacities or resentments he may stand in awe; and that, because he considers Almighty God as infinitely more discerning and powerful than all; and that it is to him we must give an account of our dealings with our fellow creatures. No artifices, no colouring can be of any avail in God's sight; for God is not mocked; he sees into the inmost recesses of the mind, and searches even the reins and the heart. This consideration strikes at the very root of all guilt and treachery, when nothing else will.

CHAP. CLXXIII.

The Temptation of Jesus. From the fourth Chapter of Matthew. A. M. 4031—A. D. 27.

THEN was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where was Jesus taken to be tempted?—How long did he fast?—What did Satan first say to him?—What did he say to him when on the pinnacle of the temple?—And when on the high mountain?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It may be observed in general upon the history of the temptation, that the design of the devil in tempting our Lord, was to try whether Jesus was the Son of God; and that it pleased God to suffer this temptation, that the devil, convinced of that truth, might reverence the power of Jesus Christ; and that it might appear that our Lord was come into the world to destroy the kingdom of Satan. Let it also be considered, that if Jesus Christ himself was tempted, we should not be surprised if we also are exposed to various temptations; and that we ought, in imitation of our Lord, to resist temptations, and particularly such as might lead us into distrust or presumption, or make us grow fond of the honours or riches of this world; or lastly, such as may tend to draw us off from the true service of God, and from that allegiance we owe him. The

method which Christ made use of to repel the temptation of Satan, by quoting the Holy Scriptures, and thus quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, we ought also to adopt.

CHAP. CLXXIV.

The Marriage Feast at Cana ; and Jesus goes to Jerusalem at the Passover, and casts the traders out of the Temple. From the second Chapter of John.

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee ; and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine ; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse : but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory ; and his disciples believed on him.

After this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples ; and they continued there not many days.

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting : and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen ; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables ; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence : make not my Father's house an house of merchandize. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What miracle did Jesus perform at the marriage at Cana?—On what occasion is it mentioned in this chapter that he went to Jerusalem?—What did he do at the temple?—What reply did he make to the Jews who asked him to show them a sign?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miracle that Christ wrought, by changing water into wine at the marriage of Cana, has this remarkable circumstance, that it was his first miracle, and that he began by that to show his divine power and calling, in the presence of the blessed virgin his mother, of his disciples, and several other persons, which caused his fame to be spread throughout Galilee, and his disciples to believe on him. For the same reason, when he came to Jerusalem, he drove out of the temple those who bought and sold there. He did the same there years after, a little before his death. Christ acting thus in the temple, which he called his Father's house, was pleased to give proof, at the very beginning of his ministry, of his divine authority, and of his great zeal; which was taken notice of by the apostles, who applied to them these words, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." It is also to be observed, that the Jews required of Christ some proofs of his authority; whereupon he told them, "Destroy this temple, and I will build it again in three days." By which he meant, that the strongest proof he could give of his receiving his authority from God, was, that he would rise from the dead the third day: but he spoke in figurative and dark terms; it not being proper, as yet, to speak more plainly concerning his death and resurrection.

CHAP. CLXXV.

Christ's Discourses with Nicodemus. From the third Chapter of St. John's Gospel.

A. M. 4031.—A. D. 27.

THERE WAS a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews : the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old ? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be ?

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things ? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen : and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things ? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him, is not condemned ; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light,

lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who was Nicodemus?—What doctrine did Christ declare unto him?—To what did he compare the operations of the Spirit?—What comparison did he make between himself and Moses?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every man must have two births, one from earth, the other from heaven; one of his body, the other of his soul: without the first, he cannot see nor enjoy this world; without the last, he cannot see nor enjoy the kingdom of God. As there is an absolute necessity that a child should be born into the world, that he may see its light, contemplate its glories, and enjoy its good; so there is an absolute necessity that the soul should be brought out of its state of darkness and sin, through the light and power of the grace of Christ, that it may be able to see, or to discern the glories and excellences of the kingdom of Christ here, and be prepared for the enjoyment of the kingdom of glory hereafter.

The new birth, which is here spoken of, comprehends not only what is termed justification or pardon, but also sanctification or holiness. Sin must be pardoned, and the impurity of the heart washed away, before any soul can possibly enter into the kingdom of God. As this new birth implies the renewing of the whole soul in righteousness and true holiness, it is not a matter that may be dispensed with; heaven is a place of holiness, and nothing but what is like itself, can ever enter it.

CHAP. CLXXVI.

Christ converses with the Woman of Samaria; he makes himself known to her. Many of the Samaritans believe on him. From the fourth Chapter of John.

THEN cometh Jesus to a city of Samaria, which is called Sy'char, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. But she saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living

water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep : from whence then hast thou that living water ? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle ? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again : but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband : for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain : and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ ; when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman : yet no man said, What seekest thou ? or, Why talkest thou with her ? The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did : Is not this the Christ ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat ? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest ? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields : for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages,

and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed, because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Near what place is Jacob's well?—Whom did Jesus meet there?—What did he request of her?—What objection did she make to giving him water?—What convinced her that he was a prophet?—What did she say, on returning into the city, to those who heard her?—What did Jesus say to his disciples when they requested him to eat?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The first reflection that is to be made here is, that Christ, meeting with a Samaritan woman near the well, in his wisdom and goodness made use of that occasion to instruct her, and to bring her to the knowledge of the truth, by speaking to her concerning himself and his doctrine, under the similitude of water. The manner in which our Lord mentioned to her this spiritual water, and the wholesome effects which it produces, is a lesson to us, that the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ is the most precious gift that God ever gave to men, and what we ought to desire with the greatest fervency. The second instruction is, that the grace of God and his covenant is no longer appropriated to one nation or to one peculiar place, as was pretended both by the Jews and Samaritans: but that all men, without distinction, may be partakers of it. Also, that the true worship which God requires of us, is not only that which is visible and external, but that of the heart; and that as he is a Spirit, they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Lastly, let us moreover observe the answer given by our Lord when urged by his disciples to take some meat: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." And to show them that they should be ready to labour, as he did, in the conversion of sinners, he uses the similitude of an approaching harvest. Let us gather from hence, that there is nothing which we ought to take greater pleasure and satisfaction in than in doing the will of God, and instructing our neighbours.

CHAP. CLXXVII.

Jesus goeth into Galilee, exercising his public Ministry, and at Capernaum cures the sick Son of a certain Nobleman. From the first Chapter of Mark, the fourth Chapter of Luke, and the fourth Chapter of John.

Now Jesus departed from Samaria, and went into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the grace of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel. And there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. For Jesus testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend: and they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

BRIEF REVIEW.

To what place is it here mentioned that Jesus first went?—What is said of the Galileans?—At what place did he perform a miracle?—What was it?—How was the nobleman made certain that his son was cured miraculously by Christ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In all our journeys we should copy our Lord's example: into whatever place we come, we should endeavour to render our presence useful; and we ought always to subordinate our personal accommodations to that

superior object. We should frequently meditate on his weariness, and his painful, exposed, and inconvenient situation, when he sat *thus* at the well; few would be cheerfully satisfied to journey, to rest, and to fare as he did. This consideration may teach the poor, patience and contentment, and the rich, self-denial, simplicity, gratitude, and liberality.

CHAP. CLXXVIII.

Jesus goeth to Nazareth, where he preserves his Life by a Miracle; and then proceeds to Capernaum, where he fixes his Dwelling. From the fourth Chapter of Luke and the fourth Chapter of Matthew.

AND Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land: But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elise'us the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Na'aman the Syrian.

And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, (whereon their city was built) that they might cast him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.

And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Neph'thalim, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Neph'thalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles : The people which sat in darkness, saw great light : and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where did Jesus appear on coming to Nazareth?—What did the people ask when he had finished reading from the prophet Esaias?—What caused him to leave Nazareth?—Where did he then go?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We, who have no such prejudices and passions as the Jews had to mislead our judgment, know that our Lord most completely verified the words of the prophet, both in their literal and their spiritual meaning. He preached the gospel to the poor in fortune, the poor in spirit, and the poor in religious knowledge. He healed the broken hearted; he raised and comforted those that were oppressed with calamity, disease, and sin. He gave sight also to the blind; he removed the film from the mental as well as the corporeal eye; and to those that sat in darkness, he disclosed at once the cheerful light of day, and still more glorious light of Divine truth. To the captives, to them that were bruised, he preached deliverance: he preached a doctrine which not only released from spiritual bondage those that had been led captive by their sins, but so softened and subdued the most ferocious minds, and diffused throughout the earth such a spirit of mildness, gentleness, mercy, and humanity, that the heavy chains of personal slavery were gradually broken in most parts of the Christian world; and they that had been for so many ages bruised by the cruel and oppressive hand of Pagan masters, were at length set free.

 CHAP. CLXXIX.

The Call of Simon and Andrew, and likewise of James and John, with the Miracle which preceded it; in the Synagogue at Capernaum Christ heals a Demoniac; and performs other Miracles throughout Galilee. From the fifth Chapter of Luke, the first Chapter of Mark, and the fourth Chapter of Matthew.

AND it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennes'aret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he

would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon, answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net.

And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so were also James and John the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. When he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. When the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

Forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever: and anon they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were pos-

essed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city: but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

BRIEF REVIEW.

At what place is Jesus represented to be in the beginning of this chapter?—What miracle did he perform here?—What did he say to Simon and Andrew, James and John, on directing them to follow him?—What miracle did he perform in the synagogue at Capernaum?—What other miracles mentioned in this chapter did he perform?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miracles of our Saviour are widely different from those performed under the Mosaic dispensation. Till he came into the world, miracles were generally expressions of God's justice and righteous indignation. The world is destroyed by a deluge of waters—the language of men at Babel is confounded—a most distressing series of calamities is sent upon the Egyptians—Pharaoh and his host are drowned in the Red Sea—the earth opens and swallows up Korah, Dathan and Abiram—nearly two hundred thousand of the army of Sennacherib when beseiging Jerusalem were cut off by the destroying angel in one night? Such were the miracles by which the divine glory was vindicated before the coming of Christ. But his miracles were expressions of kindness—exhibitions of the most tender compassion. There was nothing in them to punish and affright mankind—no appearances of terror or of vengeance! He fed the hungry, healed the sick, made the lame to walk, gave sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, soundness to palsied limbs, and raised the dead to life! A bright radiance of the most mild and ineffable glory overshadowed all his mighty acts. Instead of destroying his most bitter enemies, seemingly his last breath was spent in prayer for his very murderers, saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!

 CHAP. CLXXX.

Christ healeth one sick of the Palsy. From the second Chapter of Mark, and the fifth Chapter of Luke.

AGAIN Jesus entered into Capernaum; and it was noised that he was in the house. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door; and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this

man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?

Immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit, that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

BRIEF REVIEW

Into what place is it here mentioned that Jesus came?—What miracle did he there perform?—What particular evidence of faith was manifested on this occasion?—Of what was Christ accused by the scribes?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Violent sickness and the fear of death, when united to some hope of recovery and an apprehension that the opportunity may speedily elapse, will render men willing to use various irksome and painful methods of cure; and the failure of one, commonly renders them more eager to make trial of another—this, indeed, is not to be blamed; on the contrary, we should put ourselves to inconveniences and hardships, in attempting the relief of the afflicted and diseased, but it is most to be desired, that their affliction may bring them to Christ for the salvation of their souls, as well as for a blessing on the means used to recover bodily health; for in that case their afflictions will certainly be either removed or sanctified. Forgiveness of sins, being the forerunner of all other real blessings, is far more valuable than the removal of any sickness; and the loss of the soul is infinitely more dreadful than the death of the body; but how very few act as if they believed these undeniable truths!

CHAP. CLXXXI.

The healing of an Impotent Man at Bethesda, in Jerusalem; the Jews persecute Jesus for doing it on the Sabbath-day. He vindicates his Conduct, maintaining his Dignity and Power. From the fifth Chapter of John.

THERE is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, with-

ered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.



THE MIRACLE AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed knew not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made

whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole. Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth : and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man ; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son : that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life : and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man ; but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

But I have greater witness than that of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I

do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you : for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only ? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father ; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ?

BRIEF REVIEW.

At what place did Jesus cure the infirm person named in this chapter ? — For what did the Jews find fault with this miracle ? — How long had the man been subject to infirmity, cured by Christ ? — What is contained in the latter part of this chapter ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The place, where the gospel is preached and divine ordinances are administered, is the true *Bethesda*. Thither, the poor and helpless repair ; and hope and wait for a cure, whatever are their spiritual diseases, or however inveterate they have become. Though the multiplied miracles of converting grace, which better ages witnessed, are not vouchsafed among us ; yet we still see instances of such as, by washing in the fountain which God hath opened, are made whole of their most desperate maladies. If any seem to meet with reiterated disappointments, they should still wait, hope, and seek ; not neglecting the means of grace, or ceasing to labour and pray for the blessing ; for sometimes they, whose case seems most hopeless, and who are ready to give up all for lost, are made partakers of mercy, peace, and spiritual health, when they least expect them. The Saviour perfectly knows, both how long men have been contracting habits of sin, and how long seeking the help and joy of his salvation ; and he continually attends in his houses of mercy, to inquire of sinners, whether they will be made whole.

CHAP. CLXXXII.

Jesus vindicates his Disciples for plucking Ears of Corn on the Sabbath ; He heals a Man with a withered Hand on the Sabbath ; He withdraws from the Pharisees and heals various sick Persons ; He retires to a Mountain and chooses his Twelve Apostles. From the tenth and twelfth Chapters of Matthew, the second and third Chapters of Mark, and the sixth Chapter of Luke.

It came to pass, that Jesus went through the corn-fields on the sabbath day ; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him ; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the show-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests ?

Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless ? But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple. The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.

And it came to pass on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man whose right hand withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day ; that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days ? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out ? How much then is a man better than a sheep ? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days.

Then saith Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-days, or to do evil ? To save life, or to kill ? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand.

And he stretched it out ; and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness ; and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea : and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan ; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he had healed many ; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

Then he charged them that they should not make him known ; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant whom I have chosen ; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased ; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry ; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory ; and in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples ; and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles ; that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach ; and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these ; the first Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother ; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother ; Philip and Bartholomew ; Thomas and Matthew the Publican ; James the son of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus ; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

And he came down with them and stood in the plain ; and the company of his disciples and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coasts of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases ; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits ; and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him ; for there went virtue out of him and healed them all.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did the disciples of Christ do on the Sabbath-day with which the Pharisees found fault?—What miracle did he afterwards perform on the Sabbath-day?—Where did he spend a whole night in prayer to God?—What did he do on the morning following?—What are the names of the twelve Apostles?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We may learn from what our Lord said concerning the Sabbath, and especially from his declaration, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, that the ordinances of religion should be regulated according to their end, which is the honour of God, and the salvation of men. It is the property of true religion to contain nothing in it but what is beneficial to men. Hereby God plainly shows, that it is not for his own benefit, that he requires men to worship and obey him; but only out of goodness, and to make them happy. God prohibited work on the Sabbath-day, lest servants should be oppressed by their masters, that the labouring beasts might have necessary rest, and that men might have a proper opportunity to attend upon his ordinances, and thereby the better to promote their eternal interests.

 CHAP. CLXXXIII.

Christ's Sermon on the Mount. From the fifth Chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick : and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill : and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment : But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment : and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him ; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths : But I say unto you, Swear not at all : neither by heaven ; for it is God's throne : nor by the earth ; for it is his

footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King: Neither shalt thou swear by thy head: because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The beatitudes, as the maxims in the first part of this chapter are called, teach us wherein the true happiness of man consists, and how to distinguish the true disciples of Christ; whose character it is, not to set their hearts upon the riches, pleasures, or honours of this world, but to be unconcerned about earthly things; to live in meekness, humility, holiness, and peace; to desire ardently and above all things, to be holy and to please God, and even joyfully to undergo persecution for the sake of the gospel.

All the commands which require the exact government of the tongue with meekness, patient endurance of injuries, love of enemies, yielding to the injurious, and doing good to our persecutors, though contrary to corrupt nature, and the maxims of an evil world, have an evident excellency in them, and are calculated to form a character of real dignity, and bearing a great resemblance to the divine purity, patience, beneficence, and mercy; and doubtless they who act according to these rules, will both have most peace and comfort themselves, and be the greatest blessings to their families, neighbours, and the community. Were they universally obeyed, the greatest part of the evils in the world would be annihilated: wars, massacres, law-suits, domestic discords, frauds, rapines, oppressions, would cease: unavoidable evils would be mitigated, and rendered more supportable; equity, truth, purity, peace, and love, would, as it were, descend from heaven to dwell on earth.

CHAP. CLXXXIV.

Christ's Sermon on the Mount continued—of Alms, Prayer, and various Precepts relating to the Christian Character. From the sixth Chapter of Matthew.

TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men; Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and

rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !

No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature ? And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek,) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our Saviour commands us carefully to avoid hypocrisy and vain glory in giving alms, in prayer, and fasting ; and to discharge these duties with sincerity and humility ; remembering that we are in the presence of God, to whom all the secrets of our hearts are exposed ; and that hypocrites have no reward to expect from him. Since the Lord's prayer was composed by Jesus Christ himself, and comprehends all that is necessary for the glory of God and our own happiness, the use we are to make of it is, to offer it up to God with the greatest reverence, fervency, and devotion ; and to adapt, not only our prayers, but likewise our thoughts and behaviour, to that excellent pattern which Christ has left us.

Whilst we ask of God, day by day, our daily bread, let it admonish us

of the uncertainty of life, and of every thing we possess in it, and therefore of the necessity of obtaining that bread of life, of which he that eateth shall never hunger. Our Saviour no where teaches us to take thought, that is, I mean anxious thought, for the morrow. He well knew that we are but creatures of a day, and that the present moment is all we can call our own: he, therefore, thought it sufficient for us to ask for present support, leaving futurity to the disposal of him, who governs the changes and chances of life. It will become us, therefore, to live daily in a sense of our uncertain condition, to form no distant schemes of pleasure or ambition; but rather, whilst it is yet in our power, to prepare for that great and awful change which awaits us, knowing that the tenure of life, like the supply of our bodily wants, is but from day to day.

CHAP. CLXXXV.

Christ's Sermon on the Mount continued; the Nature of true Religion. From the seventh Chapter of Matthew, and the sixth Chapter of Luke.

JUDGE not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. And he spake a parable unto them; Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect, shall be as his master.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye: and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father

which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What a fund of encouragement is here for all manner of virtue, and particularly for devotion, that we may be fit objects of God's gracious care and providence, when we reflect that every petition of a good man

is heard and regarded by him who holds the reins of nature in his hand. When God, from his throne of celestial glory, issues out that uncontrollable command, to which all events are subject, the desires of humble pious Christians are not overlooked by him. The good man's prayer is among the reasons by which the Omnipotent is moved in the administration of the universe. How little is all earthly greatness! How low and impotent the proudest monarchs, if compared with the poorest person in the world, who leads but a good life! For their influence, even in their highest prosperity, is only among weak men like themselves; but the poor man's prayer pierceth the clouds: and, weak and contemptible as he seems, he can draw down the host of heaven, and arm the Almighty in his defence, so long as he can but utter his wants, or turn the thoughts of his heart to God.

CHAP. CLXXXVI.

The Servant of the Centurion healed; and the Widow's Son is raised from the dead at Nain. From the seventh Chapter of Luke, and the eighth Chapter of Matthew.

Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof; wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast

believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain: and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak, and he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us; and, that God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is the first miracle performed by Jesus, mentioned in this chapter?—At what place was it performed?—What did Jesus say to the Centurion?—What was the next miracle performed by him?—Where was it?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The history of the Centurion, who entreated our Lord to heal his servant, is particularly remarkable, for the profound humility and surprising faith of that man, who did not think himself worthy to receive Christ into his house; and was persuaded, that without coming to him, our Lord needed only to say the word, and the servant would be healed, with as much ease as he, being an officer, could command the soldiers under him to obey him. Our Lord's great commendation of the faith of that officer (who was born a heathen) saying that he had not found so great faith even among the Jews, obliges us to take great notice of that example, and to imitate the faith and humility of the Centurion.

We have here too a wonderful example of the divine goodness. When the widow, following her only son to the grave, gave herself up for a forlorn mourner, past redress, the God of comfort meets her, pities her, relieves her. Here was no solicitor, but his own compassion. In other occasions, he was sought and sued to. The centurion comes to him for a servant; the ruler, for a son; Jairus, for a daughter; the neighbours, for a paralytic;—here he seeks up the patient, and offers the cure unrequested. While we have to do with the Father of mercies, our afflictions are the most powerful suitors. No tears, no prayers, can move him so much as his own commiseration. O God, none of our secret sorrows can be hid from thine eyes; and when we are past all our hopes, all possibilities of help, thou art then the nearer to us for deliverance.

CHAP. CLXXXVII.

Reply of Jesus to the Messengers of John ; also his Reflections in Consequence of his Appeal to his mighty Works. From the eleventh Chapter of Matthew and the seventh Chapter of Luke.

WHEN John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see : the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? A reed shaken with the wind ? But what went ye out for to see ? A man clothed in soft raiment ? Behold they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out for to see ? A prophet ? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist : notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation ? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced ; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Wo unto thee, Chozazin; wo unto thee, Bethsaida: for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Where was John when he heard of the works of Christ?—Whom did he send to Christ?—What cities did Christ upbraid for their impenitence?—What does he say in the conclusion of this chapter?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is unhappily too true, that from the first coming of Christ in the flesh to this time, there have been unreasonable men who have been offended in him. And there will not fail to be such even within the pale of Christianity. His doctrines have been complained of, as laying too great restraint on human nature, as hard and impracticable sayings. His mysteries have been doubted of, disputed against, and ridiculed by men of perverse and proud minds, who are resolved to believe nothing farther than they can thoroughly and clearly comprehend. His person itself, the circumstances and way of his coming into the world, have been an offence to many; "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" a constant occasion of falling to all sinful men, whose high minds are not brought into captivity to the obedience of faith, nor made fit for the reception of the truth, as it is in Jesus. But blessed are all they, as his own lips have declared, who in none of these ways are offended in him.

The first and obvious idea presented to the mind, by the invitation in the concluding part of this chapter, is, that man labours under a heavy

burden ; from which Christ engages to relieve him, upon condition that application be made to him for that purpose—in other words, that Jesus Christ is the source, from whence all spiritual rest is derived ; and that those sinners who would find that rest must go to Christ for it. And when sinners shall duly feel the burden of sin, accompanied with a deep conviction that the weight of it must finally sink them into perdition, their hearts will rejoice at the sound of the gracious invitation, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

CHAP. CLXXXVIII.

A Woman who had been a Sinner, is publicly assured of Forgiveness by Jesus sitting at Meat with a Pharisee. From the seventh Chapter of Luke.

ONE of the Pharisees desired Jesus that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that touched him : for she is a sinner. Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most ? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman ? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet : but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss : but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint : but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said

unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him, began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

BRIEF REVIEW.

On what occasion was Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee?—On what account did Simon find fault with him?—How did Jesus convince Simon that he had acted properly?—What did he say to the woman?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The history of the woman that was a sinner, has something in it very remarkable, and instructs us in the nature and efficacy of true repentance. We find in the penitent sinner here mentioned a pattern of that profound humility with which sinners ought to bewail their sins; and of that lively sorrow which pierces the soul, and which expresses itself by confession, by tears, and by all the tokens of a sincere compunction, and of a holy confusion, and which produces an entire renunciation of sin. We see here, with how much goodness the Saviour of the world receives true penitents, and pardons their sins. What he says to the Pharisee, who believed that Jesus was not a prophet, because he permitted that same sinner to approach him, and to kiss his feet, tended to convince him, that he knew very well what this woman was, but that he did not reject great sinners when they were truly penitent, and that we also should not reject nor despise them.

 CHAP. CLXXXIX.

In a second Journey through Galilee Jesus heals a Dæmoniack; the Sin against the Holy Ghost; the Scribes and Pharisees reprov'd for seeking a Sign. From the ninth and twelfth Chapters of Matthew, the third Chapter of Mark, and the eighth, ninth, and eleventh Chapters of Luke.

AND Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease, among the people. And the twelve were with him; and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits, Mary called Magdale'ne, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto him of their substance. And they went into an house. And the multitude cometh again together, so that they could not so much as eat bread. When his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said, He is beside himself.

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind

and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them; for she came from the utmost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here! The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body, therefore, be full of light, having no part dark,

the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest : and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself ; and they enter in, and dwell there : and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Of what did the Pharisees accuse Christ, when he wrought miracles?—What answer did he make to them?—What did he say concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost?—What did he say concerning the men of Nineveh?—What concerning the wisdom of Solomon?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If the sin against the Holy Ghost be of so high a nature, and so unpardonable, as represented by our Saviour, in this chapter, then must all approaches to it be very dreadful : such as profane scoffing at religion, and the Holy Spirit of God, which dwells in good men ; perverse infidelity notwithstanding all reasonable evidence ; obstinacy in a sinful and vicious course ; sinning against the clear convictions of our consciences. These are all offences of a flagrant character, and of great provocation in the sight of God ; and, if they be long continued, we know not how soon God may withdraw his grace from us, and suffer us to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

CHAP. CXC.

Regard of our Saviour for his Disciples ; and he denounces Woes against the Pharisees, Scribes, and Teachers of the Law. From the twelfth Chapter of Matthew, and the eleventh Chapter of Luke.

WHILE he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother ? And who are my brethren ? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren ! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him : and he went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter ; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also ? But rather give alms of such things as ye have ; and behold, all things are clean unto you. Wo unto you, Pharisees ! for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God : these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Wo unto you, Pharisees ! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also. And he said, Wo unto you also, ye lawyers ! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Wo unto you ! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers : for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute : that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation ; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple : verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. Wo unto you, lawyers ! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge : ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things ; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Christ say when told of his mother and brethren ?—On what occasion did he reprove the Pharisees and scribes ?—What led to his reproving them ?—What did they do when thus reproved ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What encouragement does our Redeemer give us to follow him wholly, to attend on his instruction, to trust in his mercy, and by obeying him, to do the will of God our Father! Earthly relatives often fail of the duties incumbent upon them: but he is such a relation and friend as men would have been, had sin never entered: indeed far more desirable. Whatever there is peculiar in the affection or regard of the different endeared relations of life, all centres in the love of Christ to his true disciples; yea, to the poorest, weakest, and most sinful of them! whatever credit, comfort, or advantage could be derived from a loving brother, father, husband, or son, who was advanced to the highest state of earthly dignity and authority, this, and far more, may we confidently expect from Christ in life, death, judgment and to eternity. Let us then cease from men, and cleave to him; let us look upon every Christian, even in the lowest condition of life, as the brother, sister, or honoured mother of the Lord of Glory, and let us love, respect, and be kind to them for his sake, and after his example, and count this our privilege and delight.

 CHAP. CXCI.

Jesus instructs his Disciples and the Multitude. From the twelfth Chapter of Luke.

In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops. And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what

thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say : for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully ; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ? And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years : take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat ; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens : for they neither sow nor reap : which neither have store-house, nor barn ; and God feedeth them : How much more are ye better than the fowls ? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit ? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest ? Consider the lilies how they grow : they toil not, they spin not ; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven ; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock : for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms : provide yourselves with bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding ; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching : verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve

them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants, and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

BRIEF REVIEW.

To whom were the instructions of this chapter given?—What did our Saviour say about fearing those who can kill the body?—What was his parable of the rich man?—How did he show the folly of taking anxious thought for the future?—What did he tell them to seek first?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We suppose that happiness consists in indulging each gay and florid fancy, each fond and effeminate desire, each dear conceit that rises uppermost in our minds when our spirits run high; and if this were true, it would follow undoubtedly, that an affluence was necessary to happiness. But God, who sees not as we see, knows that happiness is produced by correcting our vain imaginations, by disciplining our passions, and by bringing us to a just sense of himself, of ourselves, and every thing else that concerns us. And let us coöperate with the Deity; let us look into our own hearts.

You must form a true relish of life, just as you would do of painting. You must not suffer your eye to be captivated by gay, glossy colourings, by gaudy and ambitious ornaments, however they may strike or dazzle

you for awhile. However wisely and industriously you may pursue wealth, honour, or power, you can never be secure against a disappointment. There is one pursuit in which you can meet with no disappointment, and that is the pursuit of virtue; since every honest and spirited endeavour after virtue, is virtue in some degree, which, if we do not slacken our endeavours, will lead on to a greater, till our goodness "shines more and more unto a perfect day."

CHAP. CXCII.

The Calamities of certain Galileans a warning to the Jews. From the thirteenth Chapter of Luke.

THERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It behooves every one of us to inquire how long we have been favoured with the means of grace, and been borne with by the long-suffering of God, and to examine whether we be now bearing fruit to his glory and the good of men, or be still mere cumberers of the ground? Such inquiries are peculiarly proper to be made at the beginning of a new year, or the return of any other periodical season. And when any are restored from sickness, and spared a little longer, in answer to the prayers of ministers or Christian friends, surely they should take their admonitions in good part, and seek to profit by their endeavours, remembering how short their respite may be, and how soon they may be cut down if not at length rendered fruitful.

CHAP. CXCIII.

The Parables of the Sower, of the Wheat and Tares, of the hid Treasure, of the goodly Pearls, and of the Net cast into the Sea. From the thirteenth Chapter of Matthew.

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed: lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that receiveth seed among the thorns is he that heareth

the word ; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it ; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field : But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the house-holder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field ? from whence then hath it tares ? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up ? But he said, Nay ; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest : and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them : but gather the wheat into my barn.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house : and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man ; the field is the world ; the good seed are the children of the kingdom ; but the tares are the children of the wicked one ; the enemy that sowed them is the devil ; the harvest is the end of the world ; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field ; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls ; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind : which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into

vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is proper to observe in general upon the parables in this chapter, and in several other places in the gospel, that our Lord used, in his teaching, to make use of parables and similitudes; and that his disciples and people might remember them the better, he drew them from the plainest and most familiar subjects. These parables were of two kinds. Some were clear, and others somewhat obscure. These last Jesus made use of when he was speaking of some points which his hearers were not at that time able to comprehend, and which he did not think fit to declare openly before his death. Such are the parables which foretold his being put to death, the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles in their stead. These truths he represented by images and similitudes, very plain and easy to be remembered, and which in a short time would, by the event, be made perfectly clear and intelligible.

CHAP. CXCIV.

Jesus gives Commandment to cross the Sea of Galilee; Incidents on the way; a Tempest stilled, and a Demoniac healed. From the eighth and ninth Chapters of Luke, and the fourth and fifth Chapters of Mark.

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that Jesus said unto his disciples, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow; and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still: and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.) And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. Forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into

the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. They that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

They that saw it told them how it befel to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him. And all men did marvel.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did a certain man say to Jesus when on the way from Capernaum to the sea of Galilee?—What miracle was performed when crossing the sea?—To what place did he come on having crossed the sea?—By whom was he then met?—What miracle did he there perform?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every miraculous relief, afforded by our Saviour when on earth to his disciples and those who applied to him for help, is an encouragement to us, under all circumstances, to make our own wants known to him. Although now in heaven, his omniscient eye ever beholds the various operations of this lower world. He knows all the sorrows and straits of his friends; and his hand is ever ready to extend the salvation needed. If he would calm an ocean tumultuous and ready to swallow up his disciples and the bark which contained them, will he not deliver us, whenever conducive to our real benefit, from those evils which seem the common lot of Christians in this life, whether of sickness, or of poverty, or of persecution, provided we repair to him in faith, in love, and in prayer? If he would then deliver a person from a demoniacal spirit, will he not now deliver his sincere followers from that spirit of moral defilement and un sanctified nature, with which the Christian is ever in conflict, and enable them to become conquerors and more than conquerors through the strength of that grace which is given for the regeneration of the world?

CHAP. CXCIV.

Levi's Feast ; the Discourse of Jesus at that time ; the Daughter of Jairus restored. From the fifth and eighth Chapters of Luke, and the second and fifth Chapters of Mark.

AND it came to pass when Jesus was returned, (to Capernaum) the people gladly received him, for they were all waiting for him. And Levi made him a great feast. As Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples ; for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it, that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners ? When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick—I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast ; and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not ? Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them ? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment—else the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles ; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred—but new wine must be put into new bottles.

Behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name ; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death : I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed ; and she shall live. Then Jesus went with him ; and much people followed him, and thronged him. And a certain woman which had an infirmity, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway she felt in her body that she was healed.

Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? His disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why



HEALING THE INFIRMITY OF THE WOMAN.

troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

And they laughed him to scorn: but when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them

that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. He then took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi : which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked : for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it ; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What fault did the scribes and Pharisees find with Jesus, at the feast of Levi?—What answer did he make?—What did he say to the woman who was healed by touching his clothes?—What other miracle is mentioned in the latter part of this chapter?—What did he say to the damsel when she was restored to life?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our blessed Lord will not obtrude himself on those who are not disposed to entertain him ; nor refuse his presence and salvation to any, whose hearts are prepared to welcome him. The feeling of distress, from which men can obtain no adequate remedy from themselves or others, is frequently the means of bringing them to Christ ; and thus severe family trials are sometimes appointed in love, to show those in affluence the vanity of their distinctions ; and so lead them to inquire after a better portion and a spiritual salvation. The history of his life is an account of his continuance in doing good, without weariness or intermission ; so that we know not whether we should most admire his divine power, or his beneficent use of it : and whilst we derive encouragement from this reflection, let us learn to use our little ability in doing what we can to alleviate the miseries and promote the good of mankind.

CHAP. CXCVI.

Jesus heals two blind Men ; He casts out a dumb Spirit ; the Pharisees again blaspheme ; Jesus again visits Nazareth, and is again rejected there. From the ninth Chapter of Matthew and the sixth Chapter of Mark.

AND when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him : and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this ? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you. And their eyes were opened ; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that

no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake : and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils, through the prince of the devils.

And he went out from thence, and came into his own country (Nazareth) ; and his disciples follow him. When the sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue : and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things ? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands ? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon ? and are not his sisters here with us ? And they were offended at him.

But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did the two blind men say to Jesus when they followed him?—What did he say to them on restoring their sight?—What other miracle mentioned in this chapter did he perform?—What did Jesus say to those who doubted his divine authority after he was returned to Nazareth ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Let sinners copy the example of these blind men ; let them stand before the Son of David, though they cannot behold him ; and let them beseech him to have mercy upon them, and open their eyes to see his glory and preciousness, his truth and will : let them persist in following him with their entreaties, and in due time he will notice and help them. In this and every other respect, we need to cry unto him daily to increase our faith ; that we may believe assuredly that he is both able and willing to do every thing for us, which pertains to our salvation. If faith be not wanting in us, love and power will not be found wanting in him : but he will say, "According to your faith be it unto you," and we shall be sent forth, as it were, to proclaim "his praises, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

CHAP. CXCVII.

Jesus instructs and sends forth his twelve Apostles. From the ninth and tenth Chapters of Matthew.

BUT when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. And commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence. When ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be

put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake : but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another : for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come. The disciple is not above his master, neither the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord : if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household ? Fear them not therefore ; for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light ; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me : and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it : and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.

He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What induced our Saviour to send forth his apostles ?—Into what places did he direct them not to go ?—Where did he direct them to go ?—What did he say concerning those who should deny him ?—Concerning those who should love their earthly friends more than himself ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In this discourse we have a strong proof of the divinity of the Christian religion, since the apostles who preached it, and those who first embraced it, were exposed to divers persecutions, and sealed the truth of the gospel, and the sincerity of their own testimony, with their blood. Upon which we may make several useful reflections: that those who make profession of truth and piety, do often expose themselves to hatred and persecution, but that God assists them in a wonderful manner: that we should not fear men, who can only hurt our body; but God alone, who can cast both body and soul into hell: that troubles and divisions often arise in the world on account of the gospel, but that this is entirely owing to the faults of men: that Christians ought to be ready to renounce all that is dearest to them in this world, to follow Christ: and lastly, that our Lord will abundantly recompense the piety and charity of those that shall receive and assist his disciples. All these considerations serve to encourage us steadfastly and openly to profess the Christian religion, to practise all its duties, and particularly to exercise works of charity with pleasure and perseverance.

 CHAP. CXCVIII.

Five thousand fed on five Loaves and two Fishes; Jesus walks on the Sea. From the sixth Chapter of John and the fourteenth Chapter of Matthew.

AFTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? Philip answereth him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. (Now there was much grass in the place.) So the men sat down in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore

they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea towards Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth, thou art the Son of God.

And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Why did the multitude follow Jesus?—What feast at that time was nigh at hand?—What were the particulars of the five thousand being fed?—What was said of Jesus, when this miracle was seen?—What other miracle did Jesus perform mentioned in this chapter?—What took place with Peter?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The beneficence of our Lord's miracles concurred with the power of them, to convince the people that he was from God: and the same spirit of love displayed in our conduct, even amidst weakness and poverty, will

best adorn the gospel, evince its divine origin and excellency, and conciliate the minds of men. If we copy the example of our Lord, in rendering hearty thanks to the Giver of all our temporal comforts, and in dispensing them liberally to the indigent; our most frugal and homely meals will be far more comfortable and blessed, than the most luxurious feast of ungodly men.

This feeding of so vast a multitude, by a method altogether extraordinary and miraculous, should be used as a seasonable hint, to make us duly consider and acknowledge that bounteous providence of God, which every day feeds numbers infinitely greater, in a most wonderful, though ordinary manner. For what proportion do five thousand men bear to those numberless kindreds and countries that constantly subsist on his liberality? What is this one marvellous enlargement of five loaves and two fishes, to the inconceivable productions of animals, the variety of plants and herbs, and other increase of the earth; and the many unknown ways by which he opens his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness?

CHAP. CXCIX.

Christ's Discourse with the Multitude in Capernaum, in the Synagogue of that City, and with his Disciples. From the sixth Chapter of John.

WHEN the people saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me, shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me : and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven ? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat ? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

These things said he in the synagoge, as he taught in Capern-

naum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying : who can hear it ? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you ? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before ? It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did the people say to Jesus when they found him at Capernaum ?
 —What was his first reply to them ?—What did he declare himself to be ?—What did his disciples say to this declaration ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our Lord's general doctrine in this chapter seems to resolve itself into this ; that, whether with faith or without, whether in the sacraments or out of the sacraments ; whether before Christ, or since ; whether here or hereafter, no man ever was or will be accepted, but in and through the grand propitiation made by the flesh and blood of Christ. This appears to be the main doctrine taught by our Lord in this chapter, which he delivers so earnestly, and inculcates so strongly. Eating and drinking, by a very common figure, means receiving : and here what is the thing to be received ? Christ himself in his whole person : " I am the bread of life ; " " he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. " But, more particularly, he is to be considered as giving his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed, for an atonement. And so the fruits of his death are what we are to receive as our spiritual food. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. His passion is our redemption, and by his death we live.

CHAP. CC.

The Pharisees find fault at the Disciples for eating with unwashen Hands ; Christ's Discourse upon the Subject ; He heals the Syrophœnician's daughter, also one that was deaf. From the seventh Chapter of Mark, and the fifteenth Chapter of Matthew.

THEN came together unto Jesus the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashen) hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all

the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Harken unto me every one of you, and understand. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him: but that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: (the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation,) and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But Jesus said unto her, let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying, go thy

way ; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech ; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit and touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man : but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it ; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well ; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet ; and he healed them : insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see : and they glorified the God of Israel.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What practice prevailed among the Jews concerning eating, mentioned in this chapter?—On what account did the Pharisees find fault with the disciples of Christ?—What parable is contained in this chapter?—What two miracles are recorded?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought to take particular notice of the miracle which Christ wrought on healing the daughter of a Canaanitish woman. He refused at first to cure her, because her mother was a Gentile. His reason for so doing was, not only by that means to excite the zeal of that woman, but likewise because the time was not yet come in which the Gentiles were to be called ; and because that during his stay upon earth, he wrought miracles only among the Jews. But seeing her perseverance and great humility, he did at last what she desired of him. By this example we may observe, that prayers made with faith, humility and perseverance, are very acceptable to God and very powerful ; that if God does not hear us at first, it is to try us to encourage our zeal, and to render us more sensible of our own unworthiness.

CHAP. CCI.

The Disciples are cautioned against the Leaven of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, and of Herod; Jesus restores a blind Man to Sight near Bethsaida; Peter repeats his Confession that Jesus was the Christ; Jesus foretells his Sufferings and Resurrection; Rebukes Peter; and exhorts all to self-denial. From the eighth Chapter of Mark and the sixteenth Chapter of Matthew.

AND Jesus left them, (the multitude;) and entering into the ship again, he departed to the other side. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your hearts yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town: and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking. After that, he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesare'a Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon-Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and

the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Of what did Christ in this chapter tell his disciples to beware?—How did he explain this?—What miracle is here recorded?—What did he ask his disciples when he came to Cesare'a Philippi?—What promise did he make to Peter?—What prediction did he make concerning himself?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The self-denial which our Saviour claims from his disciples is nothing more than a willingness to part with all earthly comforts and conveniences, to quit all our temporal interests and enjoyments, and even life itself, for the sake of him and his. And he who commands us to perform this duty, hath himself in his own person given us the greatest example of self-denial, in that he denied himself more, and suffered more grievous things than any of us can do. He underwent more affliction, and had more contempt poured upon him than ever was upon any of the sons of men; and yet he endured all this with incredible patience and meekness, with the greatest evenness and constancy of mind, and with the most perfect submission and resignation of himself to the will of God.

If then he thus denied himself, well may we, who have much less to deny, but much more cause and reason for it. He did it voluntarily and of choice, but it is our duty. He did it for our sakes, we do it for our own.

CHAP. CCII.

Christ's Transfiguration ; His Discourse with the three Disciples as they were descending from the Mount ; He casts out a Deaf and Dumb Spirit. From the ninth Chapter of Luke, and the seventeenth Chapter of Matthew.

AND it came to pass, about an eight days after, Jesus took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias : who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias ; not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them : and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son : hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come ? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things : but I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed : likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

On the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee look upon my son : for he is mine only child. And lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out : and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to

cast him out, and they could not. And Jesus answering, said, O faithless generation, and perverse, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Which three disciples were with Jesus at this time?—What took place when they were upon the Mount?—What was said by the voice that came out of the cloud?—What miracle did he then perform?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

To form some faint conception of the Redeemer's glory now in heaven, and at his future appearance to judge the world, let us contemplate him upon the Mount, when the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. With this scene before our eyes, we may meditate to advantage on "his decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem;" and thence follow him with our thoughts to his present exaltation in heaven, where he is surrounded with his saints, who there appear with him in glory and expatiate in his praises. This may reconcile us to our present trials, and prepare us for the stroke of death; that we may go to behold and share that glory, one glimpse of which hath sometimes made us say, "It is good for us to be here." But we must now walk by faith, and hear obediently the words of the beloved Son of God; treasuring up every comfortable experience of his love, and every discovery of his majesty and excellency, to be our support in the days of darkness.

CHAP. CCIII.

The Disciples contend who shall be greatest. Jesus' Conduct and Discourse on that Occasion. From the ninth Chapter of Mark, and the eighteenth Chapter of Matthew.

AND Jesus came to Capernaum: and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall

humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven ; and whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me : and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us : and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not : for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out : it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it ? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye ? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray ? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three

witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? till seven times ? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times ; but until seventy times seven.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents : but forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants which owed him an hundred pence ; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not ; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant ! I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me : shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

BRIEF REVIEW.

About what did the disciples dispute among themselves?—In what manner did Jesus reprove them?—What did he say when it was reported to him that one had been working miracles in his name?—What

did he say to Peter about the forgiveness of injuries?—What was the parable of a king by which he illustrated the subject of forgiveness of injuries?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It might be thought at first view, that the description in this parable is overcharged, so incredible does it seem that a man, who had experienced such kind and merciful treatment, should, while the memory of so great a mercy was fresh upon his mind, even the very next moment, handle his fellow-servant, who had made the same humble submission and request to him, which he had done to his lord, with so much harshness and cruelty, for so inconsiderable a sum. This would appear hardly credible, did we not see by daily experience how very unreasonable and unmerciful some men are, and with what confidence they can ask and expect great mercy from God, when they are willing to shew none to men. We commonly plead the greatness of the injury done to us, as a reason for not forgiving the offender. But whoever thou art that makest this an argument why thou canst not forgive thy brother, lay thine hand upon thine heart and bethink thyself, how many more and much greater offences thou hast been guilty of against God; look up to that just and powerful Being who is above, and consider well, whether thou dost not both expect and stand in need of more mercy and favour from him, than thou canst find in thy heart to show to thine offending brother.

CHAP. CCIV.

Jesus restores to sight One blind from his Birth; and Consequences of this Miracle.
From the ninth Chapter of John.

AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is, by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He

answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he ? He said, I know not.

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles ? And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes ? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind ? How then doth he now see ?

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind : but by what means he now seeth we know not ; or who hath opened his eyes we know not : he is of age ; ask him : he shall speak for himself.

These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews : for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age ; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise : we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not : one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee ? How opened he thine eyes ? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear ; wherefore would you hear it again ? Will ye also be his disciples ?

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses : as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners : but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast

altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did the disciples ask Jesus concerning a blind person?—What was his reply?—What was the blind person directed to do in order to be healed?—What reason did the Pharisees offer against this miracle?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jesus anoints the eyes of the patient with clay, and bids him go and wash it off with water, in the pool of Siloam: in consequence of which, when the water should wash away the clay, the divine power would take away blindness. Now, if this man had been a modern philosopher, he would have put a question or two: he would have said, "Clay! what can that do? it will make my eyes worse instead of better. And as to the water that is to wash away, when did that make a blind man see? And why the waters of Siloam? What are they more than others?" Thus does human wisdom stand questioning, and expecting to have reason for every thing; and this in cases where perhaps a reason cannot be given; the will of God being the only reason, and the best of all; but it is such as human reason never yet submitted to: nothing but faith can submit to the will of God: and as nothing but the will and pleasure of God can save lost mankind, nothing but faith which submits to the will can be saved. Man asks, How can an effect follow from that which is no cause of it? But faith answers, It will be a cause, if God shall please to make it so: therefore I will take it as a cause, and trust to him for the effect. Thus doth faith reason, and it finds its own account in so doing. The poor man now before us, being blessed with common sense, and having none of that fine superior sense which turns a man into a fool by making him act absurdly, did as he was bid; he went to the proper place, though he could give no reason for it but the command of Christ, and he returned with his eyesight.

CHAP. CCV.

A Teacher of the Law instructed how he may obtain eternal Life ; Story of the good Samaritan ; the Disciples are instructed in relation to the Duty of Prayer. From the tenth and eleventh Chapters of Luke.

AND, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? He said unto him, What is written in the law ? how readest thou ? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right : this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour ?

Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. By chance there came down a certain Priest that way ; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was : and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him ; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves ? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

It came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, (Galilee,) when he ceased, he said unto his disciples, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves ; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him : and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not ; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed ; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend : yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto

you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

BRIEF REVIEW.

What question was proposed to Jesus by the lawyer?—What answer was given?—By what parable did Jesus teach him in the nature of brotherly love?—By what parable did he teach his disciples the importance of perseverance in prayer?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We learn from the parable of the good Samaritan, that we ought to account every man our neighbour, though a stranger, an enemy, a sinner, or one of a different sect and persuasion. Let him be what he will, he is a human creature; and as such, he is entitled to humanity and courtesy in common intercourse, to direction and instruction if he asks it and stands in need of it, and to relief and assistance if he is in distress. Thus we are to learn, that no difference of nation or religion, no distinction of party, nor division of interests or affections, should ever restrain us from owning one as our neighbour, whom we are capable of serving in a neighbourly way, by any kind offices whatsoever.

CHAP. CCVI.

Christ cures a Woman who had been afflicted Eighteen Years; He speaks several Parables illustrating the Nature of his Kingdom; He answers the Question—Are there few that be saved? From the thirteenth Chapter of Luke.

AND he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath: and, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

The ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because

that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite; doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden: and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in; and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What miracle of Jesus is mentioned in the beginning of this chapter?—Why did the ruler of the synagogue find fault with him for it?—To what did Christ compare the kingdom of heaven?—What reply did he make to the question—Are there few saved?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

From the answer to the question, *Are there few that be saved?* Christ shows that all may obtain salvation who display constancy, diligence, and courage, in conflicting with the world, the flesh, and the devil. He cautions us too, in this answer, against unnecessary curiosity about the salvation of others; but teaches us to be careful in working out our own "with fear and trembling," that is, with diligence and humility, not trusting to our own merits, but to God's mercy. He signifies that it was not the business of mankind to pry into what God has hid, but to mind what he has revealed; and to master another difficulty, that of fulfilling his commands; that multitudes, indeed, who profess his religion, would finally appear to have professed it in vain; but that all this was not to be matter of idle speculation amongst men: they are each to take care and practise their own duties; whatever number may be saved, great or small, they knew the way, and but one way there was, to become part of that number.

 CHAP. CCVII.

Christ teacheth Humility, and to feast the Poor; the Parable of the Supper; the Difficulties attending the Profession of Religion stated. From the fourteenth Chapter of Luke.

It came to pass, as Jesus went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him. And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms, saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come: for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned and said unto them, Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

BRIEF REVIEW.

At whose house is Jesus represented to be in this chapter?—How did he teach humility?—Whom did he say should be invited to entertainments?—What was the parable of the supper?—Who did he say could not be his disciple?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Christ recommends both humility and charity, telling us that they who endeavour to exalt themselves, shall be abased before God, and even before men, while those that humble themselves shall be exalted: and exhorting us not to imitate those worldly people, who only welcome the rich and their friends, but despise and neglect the poor and unfortunate. The parable of the feast signifies, that the Jews, and especially the chief among them, were to be rejected for not embracing the invitations which God made them by Jesus Christ and his apostles; and that those who were the most despised, and even the Gentiles themselves, should receive those favours which the Jews had rejected. Christ warns us most expressly, that in order to be his disciples, we must first learn to renounce every thing that may hinder us from following him. It is with this view that he proposes the parable of a man that was going to build a tower, and that of one king who was going to fight with another.

 CHAP. CCVIII.

Parable of the Lost Sheep—of the Piece of Silver—and of the Prodigal Son. From the fifteenth Chapter of Luke's Gospel.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners, for to hear him. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not

many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled himself with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.

When he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Now his eldest son was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing: and he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant? And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is the first parable mentioned in this chapter?—What is the second one?—What are the principal circumstances in the parable of the prodigal son?—Why did his brother object to the expressions of joy at his return?—What reply did the father make to him?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What shall we say of the tenderness and compassion of God towards penitent sinners? It cannot be set forth more pathetically and affectionately than in this parable. On the one hand, we have the description of a graceless youth, unthankful, stubborn and disobedient, wilful, who had no cause for complaint, and would have had none to blame but himself, if he had been left to perish. But as soon as he repented, and turned his face homewards, we see on the other hand, the affectionate father, who could not contain himself so much as to stay at home, and wait there for his son's submission, but while he was yet afar off, ran to meet him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. What conceptions ought we to have of God's compassion to penitent sinners answerable to this description!

 CHAP. CCIX.

Parable of the unjust Steward, and of the rich Man and Lazarus ; Jesus further instructs his Disciples concerning Offences. Forgiveness of Injuries, Faith and Obedience. From the sixteenth and seventeenth Chapters of Luke.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward ; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship : for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do, for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? I cannot dig ; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely : for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much ; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will com-

mit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but wo unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and

he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. But which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow (*think*) not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What are the particulars of the parable of the unjust steward? — What is said concerning the law? — What request is the rich man represented to make to Abraham? — What was the reply made to him? — What instruction did our Saviour give his disciples on the subject of forgiveness of injuries?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This whole chapter tends to teach us how we must use the good things of this world. What is here said of the unfaithful steward, who to make himself friends, discharged his master's debtors of part of what they owed him, must not be understood as if Christ commended the proceeding of that man, since such an action would be a manifest injustice and breach of trust. He only designed to teach us thereby, that as this steward raised himself by the goods of his master, before he left his service; so we ought to secure for ourselves an entrance into a better life, by employing our wealth to pious and charitable purposes. It is to stir us up to this duty, that Christ says, that those who cannot make a right use of the corruptible things of this life, do thereby show that they are unworthy to possess heavenly things. It is with the same view he declares, that we cannot serve God, and set our heart upon riches at the same time. This he proves by the example of the Pharisees, who were covetous, and who, although they had a very high esteem of themselves, were abominable in the sight of God, and the professed enemies of his kingdom. But this is what he particularly aims at in the parable of the wicked rich man and Lazarus, whereby our Lord represents what happens to those

who, instead of assisting the miserable, employ their wealth in gratifying their own luxury and sensuality. We see in this parable, that as the condition of men is very different in this life, so it will likewise be after death, and that we cannot judge of the happiness or misery of men by what happens to them in this world. We discover, that the righteous enjoy sweet repose after their death, while the wicked are tormented; and that the condition of them both is unchangeable. The answer which the patriarch Abraham returned to the wicked rich man, who prayed him to send Lazarus to his brethren, is a lesson to us, that God gives us, during this life, by his holy word, means sufficient to avoid destruction; that those who do not lay hold of these means, are without excuse; that they must not expect that God should work miracles for their conversion; and that, although he should, yet such miracles would not convince them.

CHAP. CCX.

Jesus cleanses ten Lepers; His Answer to the Inquiry when the Kingdom of God will come; Parable of the unjust Judge and of the Publican and Pharisee; Jesus received into Martha's House. From the seventeenth, eighteenth, and tenth Chapters of St. Luke.

As Jesus entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the Priests. And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God; and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto his disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, See there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of Man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together: the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint: saying, There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city: and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the

other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about



JESUS WITH MARTHA AND MARY.

much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she help me. And Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

BRIEF REVIEW.

By whom was Jesus met on entering a certain village?—What then took place?—What did he say concerning the days of Lot?—What application did he make in the case of Sodom?—How did he illustrate the necessity of perseverance in prayer?—What was the parable of the Pharisee and Publican?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Are the good tidings of salvation through faith in a crucified Saviour received by all of us with those sensations of gratitude, with that desire to promote the glory of God, which blessings so incalculable should excite? Do we all "with a loud voice glorify God, and fall down on our face, at his feet, giving him thanks?" Or rather may not the pathetic expostulation of the Redeemer of the world be repeated to us, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" While the offer of the forgiveness of sins, of the cleansing of our spiritual leprosy, is freely made to all, does one in ten, does one in a hundred, embrace it as he ought, with prayers of devout adoration to the God of his life and of his strength? Do we acknowledge, that it is of the free mercy and love alone of our heavenly Father, that the gift of everlasting life is vouchsafed to us miserable sinners?

 CHAP. CCXI.

Jesus keeps the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem, and then goes to Bethabara. From the tenth Chapter of John.

AND it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken: say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphem-

est ; because I said, I am the Son of God ? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works ; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

Therefore they sought again to take him : but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized ; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle : but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.

BRIEF REVIEW.

On what occasion is Jesus mentioned in this chapter as being at Jerusalem ?—What did the Jews say to him ?—What violence did they offer him ?—What reason did they assign for doing it ?—Where did he then go ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It must be remarked by every serious reader, that our Lord did frequently speak of himself to the Jews, as being not only sent of God as their Messiah, but as being one with him. And it is as evident that in this sense, the priests and Pharisees understood him : and it was because they would not credit this, that they accused him of blasphemy. Now, if our Lord was not the person they understood him to state himself to be, he had the fairest opportunity from their strong remonstrances, to correct their misapprehension of his words, if they really had mistaken his meaning—but this he never attempts. He rather strengthens his assertions in his consequent discourses with them ; which, had not his positions been true, he could not have done even as an honest man. He not only asserted himself to be equal with God, but wished them to believe it to be true : and he amply confirmed this heavenly doctrine by the miracles he wrought.

CHAP. CCXII.

Jesus raises Lazarus from the Dead, and the Consequences of this Miracle. From the eleventh Chapter of John.

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When

he had heard therefore, that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

These things said he: and after that, he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead: And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then when Jesus came he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. And said, where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him—He hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Then gathered the chief Priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high Priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but, being high Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Of what place was Lazarus?—Who were his sisters?—By what other name is Thomas called?—What did Jesus say to Martha when they met?—What is said of Jesus before coming to the grave of Lazarus?—Who was high Priest that year?—To what place did Jesus repair after raising Lazarus from the dead?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are assured, that our deceased relatives shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day, and that all believers shall then appear with Jesus in glory: yet this assurance, comfortable as it is, cannot wholly allay our anguish for the loss of those who were a daily blessing to us. But we should by no means “sorrow like men without hope for those who sleep in him:” neither should we look forward to death with dismay: for our gracious Friend, who gave himself for us, is “the resurrection and the life;” and death is now a conquered enemy, or rather converted into a friend to every believer. Such of them whose bodies now sleep in the grave live in heaven, and shall live for ever; and they who are alive and remain, shall never die, for Jesus hath “abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.”

 CHAP. CCXIII.

Jesus lays his Hands upon young Children and blesses them; His Discourse with a rich Man, who asked how he might obtain eternal Life; the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. From the tenth Chapter of Mark, and the nineteenth and twentieth Chapters of Matthew.

AND they brought young children to Jesus, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto

him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest : go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved ; for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God ! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God ! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved ? And Jesus looking upon them, saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God : for with God all things are possible.

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions ; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last ; and the last first.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard ; and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way.

Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle ? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard ; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired

about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What took place in regard to little children?—What question was asked Jesus by a rich man who came to him?—What answer did he make?—What did Jesus then say to his disciples?—What are the particulars of the parable of the householder who went to hire labourers into his vineyard?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The discourse our Lord had with the rich young man mentioned in this chapter, teaches that to enter into life everlasting, we must keep the commandments of God; and further, be ready to forsake all that we possess in this world when God calls us to it, and when we cannot keep them without being wanting in our duty towards him. The concern which the young man discovered at what Christ said to him, and the declaration of our Saviour that it would be very hard for rich men to resolve to forsake their goods to come into the church, shows that riches do commonly fix our hearts upon the world, and that the enjoyment of them is always dangerous. Nevertheless Christ has taught us, that such a renunciation of worldly goods is not an impossible thing, but on the contrary both practicable, and even easy and agreeable too, when we are enlightened by faith and assisted by the Spirit of God. If all Christians are not called, as the Apostles were, to forsake all to follow Christ, we ought at least to take heed that the good things of this life do not hinder our salvation; we ought not to set our heart upon them, we should learn to use them without abusing them, and to employ them in works of piety and charity. By this means we shall procure to ourselves a treasure in heaven, and partake of those blessings, with which our Lord has promised to reward both in this world and the next, such as shall fulfil all these duties.

CHAP. CCXIV.

The ambitious Request of James and John ; Jesus restores Sight to two blind Men near Jericho ; He visits Zaccheus ; the Parable of the Nobleman and the ten Pounds. From the tenth Chapter of Mark, the twentieth Chapter of Matthew, and the nineteenth Chapter of Luke.

AND James and John, the sons of Zebedée, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you ? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of ? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ? And they say unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of ; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized : But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give ; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

When the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them ; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you ; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister ; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be administered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David ! And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace ; but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David ! And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you ? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes : and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who

he was ; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him ; for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down ; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and he delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this Man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant : because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin : for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow : wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury ? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one

which hath shall be given ; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me. And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What request did James and John make to Jesus?—What reply did he make?—What miracle did he perform near Jericho?—What did Zaccheus say to Jesus?—What was the reply?—What were the particulars of the parable of the nobleman and the ten pounds?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we ask such things as are truly good for us or others, God will not refuse our requests: but when we pray under the influence of pride, avarice, or any other passion, we know not what we ask: we mistake poison for food or medicine: and if he loves us, he will withhold from us what we foolishly crave. If we would at last be conformed to our glorified Lord, we must be willing here to have fellowship with him in his sufferings: we must pass through tribulation and reproach; we must drink in some measure of his bitter cup, and experience some degree of his afflictive baptism; yet how light, and mingled with comfort, are our sharpest trials, compared with the unmixed agony and anguish which he endured for us! Possessing a good hope of being admitted to the felicity of heaven, we shall be satisfied with the thought, that it will be “according as it is prepared for us by our heavenly Father.”

CHAP. CCXV.

Jesus proceeds to Jerusalem, amidst the Acclamations of the Disciples and the Multitude; the barren Fig-tree; and Jesus' Discourse with the chief Priests, the Scribes and Elders in the Temple. From the eleventh Chapter of Mark, the twenty-first and twenty-second Chapter of Matthew, and the nineteenth Chapter of Luke.

AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you; and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him: and straightway he will send him hither. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain

of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them, even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

When he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there. Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!

Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

And when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses.

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which, if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons: and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you, in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and stoned another, and killed another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said

among themselves, This is the heir ; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen ?

They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner : this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken : but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding : and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner ; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready : come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise : and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth : and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways ; and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good : and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment : and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment ? And he was speechless. Then saith the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Jesus do when he came to Bethphage and Bethany?—What did the multitude say and do when Jesus approached Jerusalem?—What reply did he make when the Pharisees found fault?—What did he do in the temple?—What miracle did he perform concerning the fig-tree?—What parables did he speak contained in the latter part of this chapter?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

To understand the reason and design of our Saviour's royal entry into Jerusalem, we must observe that he had avoided till then all appearance of pomp, and being acknowledged publicly for the Messiah; but he thought fit, six days before his death, to make known to the world that he was the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and to be acknowledged for such by the people that attended him, and to enter into the temple in the midst of the acclamations of a great multitude. Nevertheless he did it after a manner that by no means resembled the splendour of worldly princes; but which discovered the utmost humility and meekness, which tended to show that he was the great King which God had promised to his people, but that his kingdom was not of this world.

Such was the spirit of the Master, such must be the spirit of the disciple. He that will reign with Christ, must be humbled and suffer with him. This is the royal road. The love of the world, in its power and honours, is as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, as the love of the grossest vice. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

 CHAP. CCXVI.

The Parable of the ten Virgins; and of the Talents; also the Description of the last Judgment. From the twenty-fifth Chapter of Matthew.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bride-

groom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What are the particular circumstances in the parable of the ten virgins?—To what subject does the latter part of this chapter relate?—What is here represented as the ground of difference that will be made between the righteous and the wicked?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The parable of the virgins is taken from the practice of the Jews at their weddings, at which the maidens were used to meet the bridegroom and bride with lighted lamps: and by this parable Christ gave his disciples to understand that they were continually to expect and be prepared for his coming. The wise virgins represent the true believers, that live in faith, and in the practice of their duty, and in the expectation of our Lord's coming; and the foolish virgins represent the false Christians who neglect their duty. The coming of the bridegroom at midnight, and the condition the wise and foolish virgins were in, signifies that Christ will come to judge the world when he is least expected; and that then those that shall be found ready will be filled with joy, and with a holy confidence, and shall be received into his glory: while, on the other hand, those who have neglected to prepare themselves, shall have for their portion nothing but misery and despair, and will in vain attempt to be admitted to the joys of the righteous.

 CHAP. CCXVII.

Jesus prepares to keep the Passover; He sits down with the Twelve; there is ambition among them; He washes the Disciples' feet; He foretels that Judas shall betray him; also foretels the fall of Peter. From the twenty-second Chapter of Luke, and the thirteenth Chapter of John.

THEN came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready. And they went and found as he had said unto them: And they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater,

he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom, one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he

spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. When he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon. And then Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. He then having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.

Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and, as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was the strife among the disciples of Christ mentioned in this chapter?—What instance of his great humility is here recorded?—Which one of his disciples objected to this?—In what manner did he make it known who should betray him?—What did he foretel concerning Peter?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Neither the deepest abasement and suffering, nor the highest possible exaltation, can ever render our blessed Redeemer for a moment inattentive to the concerns of his disciples, whom he hath chosen, redeemed, and called to be his own for ever. The same love which induced him to ransom and reconcile them when enemies, still influences him to pity their sorrows, to pardon their sins, to supply their wants, to preserve their souls, and to comfort their hearts, now that he hath taught them to trust, love and to serve him: and having loved them hitherto, he will love them to the end, and for ever.

CHAP. CCXVIII.

After foretelling his Disciples that he was to be taken from them, he comforts them with the Promise of the Holy Ghost. From the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth Chapters of John.

LET not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself : that where I am, there ye may be also. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever : Even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father : for my Father is greater than I. I am the vine, ye are the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain : that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own : but

because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you : He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment : of sin, because they believe not on me ; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.—In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer : I have overcome the world.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What encouragement does Jesus give his disciples in regard to prayer? —What does he say to them concerning love to each other?—And concerning persecution from the world?—What did he say the Comforter would do?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst we admire the unspeakable love of Jesus to us, according to the Father's love of him, let us follow his example of obedience, that we may continue in his love ; and, as he rejoices over us to do us good, so may our joy in him and his salvation be full, by near communion with him and a conscious walk before him. Let us often recollect what a kind and gracious Lord we serve. It is his commandment, that we love one another, as he hath loved us : and no love of man to his dearest friend ever equalled his love to us, when strangers and enemies. But let us observe, that they only are the Redeemer's friends, who "do whatsoever he commands them." He hath stated this evidence, and insisted on this return of friendship ; and it is presumption to claim the privilege, whilst we allow ourselves in any instance of disobedience.

CHAP. CCXIX.

Christ's Prayer to the Father. From the seventeenth Chapter of St. John's Gospel.

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come : glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee ; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine. All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent

me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

May we continually recollect that union and communion with the Father and the Son, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and union, peace, and harmony with one another, formed the substance of our Redeemer's prayer for all his future disciples to the end of time. Let us then "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" and let us pray for a larger portion of divine illumination in behalf of ourselves and all our brethren, that we may all be united in one mind and judgment. Thus we shall have a measure of the Redeemer's glory conferred on us, by being conformed to his image, united with his people, and hated by those only, who hate him, and the Father that sent him. Thus at length we shall surely be with him for ever, to behold his glory, and enjoy as one with him, that love, with which the Father loved him before the foundation of the world; and shall possess the most complete felicity, in the full knowledge of that glorious God whom the world hath not known; but in knowing whom, angels and archangels find blessedness of which in our present state we can frame no adequate conception.

CHAP. CCXX.

The Agony of Jesus in Gethsemane; He is betrayed by Judas. From the twenty-sixth Chapter of Matthew, the twenty-second Chapter of Luke, and the eighteenth Chapter of John.

AND when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh to the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He went again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for

their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none. Now he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And behold, one of them which were with Jesus, stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Jesus say to his disciples when at the Mount of Olives?—What took place at Gethsemane?—By what sign did Judas discover Jesus to the Jews?—For what did Jesus reprove one with him, after he was betrayed?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What more lively representation can we possibly desire of our Lord's willing sufferings for our sakes, than this which the tragical scene in the garden sets before our eyes? Those tortures of body, and that exceeding sorrow and heaviness, even unto death; those agonies and earnest prayers, which extorted even drops of blood, and a most vehement importunity that the bitterness of that cup, which he was then about to drink, might, if possible, pass from him: these are all indications of anguish and grief of heart, greater than can be expressed. By all these pangs our Lord has convinced us at how dear a price he thought our souls worth purchasing; what obligations to love and gratitude are laid upon those for whom he endured so much; and how highly displeasing in the sight of God sin must ever be, since so heavy a load of suffering was laid by God on the Son of his love, when through his unspeakable kindness he submitted to bear the sins of others.

 CHAP. CCXXI.

Jesus is brought before Annas and Caiaphas; Peter denies him thrice; He confesses himself to be the Christ, and is pronounced Guilty of Death; He is taken before Pilate, who sends him to Herod. From the eighteenth Chapter of John, the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh Chapters of Matthew, and the twenty-third Chapter of Luke.

AND they led him (Jesus) away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high Priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high Priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high Priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spoke unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. And the servants and officers stood there who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied

before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while, came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

The high Priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I have said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high Priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief Priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, and they sought for false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high Priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high Priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?

When the morning was come, all the chief Priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And

when they had bound him, they led him away : and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. And they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man ? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death : that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews ? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me ? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew ? Thine own nation and the chief Priests have delivered thee unto me ? What hast thou done ? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then ? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth ? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. And when he was accused of the chief Priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee ? And he answered him to never a word ; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What counsel did Caiaphas give the Jews ?—What were the circumstances of Peter's denying Christ ?—What did the officer do to Jesus for confessing himself Christ before Caiaphas ?—What other insults did he receive before Caiaphas ?—Before whom was Jesus then brought ?—To whom did Pilate send him ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The fall of Peter, who, after having been warned by our Lord, and after having protested that he would never renounce him, did yet deny him three times, even with imprecations and oaths, is a sad instance of human inconstancy and frailty. By which we see, that even those who have good intentions, may greatly fall, if they are not fortified against temptation: and that to secure ourselves from it, it behooves us to stand upon our guard, and to suspect ourselves; to pray without ceasing, and to shun the places, and avoid the occasions that may draw us into sin. But we must likewise consider, that if the fall of Peter was great, his repentance was speedy, and that he bitterly bewailed his fault. So we, when we happen to fall, ought to rise quickly, and atone for our sin by the tears of a sincere repentance, and by a true amendment of our lives.

 CHAP. CCXXII.

Herod questions Jesus, and sends him back to Pilate, who seeks to release him, and afterwards delivers him to the Jews to be crucified. From the twenty-seventh Chapter of Matthew, the twenty-third Chapter of Luke, and the nineteenth Chapter of John.

AND when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief Priests and scribes stood, and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

And Pilate, when he had called together the chief Priests, and the rulers, and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him: I will therefore chastise him and release him.

Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief Priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered, and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

When he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man! When the chief Priests, therefore, and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour; and he saith unto the Jews, Be-

hold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief Priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands, before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired: but he delivered Jesus to their will. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What was done with Jesus when before Herod?—To whom did Herod send him?—What was the governor wont to do at the feast of the Passover?—How did Pilate propose to release Jesus?—Why did he not release him?—How was Jesus arrayed for crucifixion?—What prisoner was released?—What did Pilate do when he delivered Jesus to be crucified?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have an example in Pilate of those that sin against light, and that sacrifice their duty and their conscience to fear, complaisance, and interest; as well as of those that think themselves guiltless when they are committing the greatest crimes, and that throw upon others the faults of which they themselves are the authors. We ought also most seriously to reflect upon these words of the Jews, when our Lord was condemned, *His blood be on us and on our children*. Both they and their posterity have found the effects of this imprecation, which they made against themselves; God having revenged the death of his Son, upon that guilty nation, by the destruction of their city, and by that miserable condition in which they have remained ever since.

CHAP. CCXXIII.

Judas repents and hangs himself. From the twenty-seventh Chapter of Matthew, and the first Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

THEN Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief Priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is

that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

And they took counsel, and bought with them the potters' field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. (Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potters' field, as the Lord appointed me.)

BRIEF REVIEW.

What did Judas do when he saw Jesus condemned?—What became of him?—What was done with the thirty pieces of money?—What prophecy did this fulfil?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The answer of the chief priests to Judas, was perfectly natural for men of their character. Men who had any feeling, any sentiments of common humanity, or even of common justice, would naturally have paused under these circumstances; would have examined Judas, and investigated the grounds of his repentance. But this was very far from entering into their plan. With the guilt or innocence of Jesus they did not concern themselves. All they wanted was, the destruction of a Man whom they hated and feared, and whose life and doctrine were a standing reproach to them. This was their sole object; as to the mercy or the justice of the case, they were perfectly indifferent. The remorse of conscience Judas felt when he saw they were going to put Jesus to death, the confession he made of his crime, and his tragical end, show the innocence of our Lord, and how unjustly he was condemned. It likewise discovers the state of a guilty conscience, and the horror of that remorse and despair wherewith the wicked are tormented when they become sensible of their crimes, and are pursued by the divine vengeance.

CHAP. CCXXIV.

Jesus is led away to be Crucified. From the twenty-seventh Chapter of Matthew, the fifteenth Chapter of Mark, the twenty-third Chapter of Luke, and the nineteenth Chapter of John.

AND as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him

a great company of people, and of women which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down, they watched him there: and set up over his head his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.**



THE CRUCIFIXION.

This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief Priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews: but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief Priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God: let him deliver him now if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.

And one of the malefactors which was hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own house.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which

slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who was compelled to bear the cross with Christ?—What did Jesus say to the women who followed him?—At what place was he crucified?—What insults did he there receive?—What was done with his garments?—What did the malefactors crucified with him say?—What miracles were wrought when he expired?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Behold the Son of God, pouring forth his blood, as well as prayers, even for those that shed it: behold him at once bearing the insults, expiating the sins, and procuring the happiness of mankind, till at last he bows his sacred head, and shuts up the solemn scene, with these short but comprehensive words, "It is finished." The great, the stupendous work is done; the universal sacrifice, which shall take in all mankind, and which all mankind shall contemplate throughout eternity with awful joy and gratitude, is completed. And can we receive these astonishing endearments, this prodigious expense of goodness, which, like the blessed effects that we are to receive from it, is such as "eye had not seen" before, "nor ear heard," nor "had it entered into the heart of man to conceive," with a dull insensibility and a stupid indifference?

An act of mercy so new and astonishing, that language must ever fail and eloquence be struck dumb, in attempting to describe it! With what zeal and gratitude then should the breast of every Christian be affected, when he considers that for him and his salvation this stupendous act of love was undertaken and accomplished! With what ardour of affection and piety should we be filled, when we thus behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us! If we are not so, even inanimate nature may justly reproach our ingratitude and insensibility. For, whilst the Lord of life expired, the graves opened, the rocks rent, and the sun withdrew his shining.

CHAP. CCXXV.

The Transactions that followed the Crucifixion of Christ, on the same and the following Day. From the twentieth-seventh Chapter of Matthew, the fifteenth Chapter of Mark, the twenty-third Chapter of Luke, and the nineteenth Chapter of John.

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And

all his acquaintance, and all the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs; but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again, another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor: and he was a good man, and a just: (the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them :) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the Centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the Centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation-day; for the sepulchre was night at hand.

And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointment; and rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment.

Now, the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people he is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch; go your way, make it as

sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who begged of Pilate the body of Jesus?—What did they do with it?—How were the people affected on seeing that Jesus was crucified?—Who prepared the spices and ointment with which the body was to be embalmed?—What did Pilate do afterwards that the body might not be stolen?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Who can reflect on the state of the poor disciples, during the whole of the time in which our blessed Lord lay under the empire of death, without sharing their sorrows? When he expired on the cross, their expectation was cut off: and when his body was laid in the grave, their hopes were buried: and nothing but the resurrection of Christ from the dead, could have given a resurrection to their hopes. It is true they had heard him say, that he would rise again the third day; but in this, it is evident, their faith was very imperfect; and the uncertainty, perplexity, anxiety and distress which they, in consequence, must have suffered, can neither be described nor imagined. Though we know the glorious result, yet who can help sympathizing with the pious father, the virgin mother, and the disconsolate disciples?

CHAP. CCXXVI.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. From the twenty-eighth Chapter of Matthew, the twenty-fourth Chapter of Luke, the twentieth Chapter of John, and the first Chapter of Acts.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Peter, therefore, went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie; and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Now Jesus, after he was risen from the dead, early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary—after that he was seen of Peter—after that he appeared to two disciples as they were going to Emmaus. Afterwards, when the eleven disciples were gathered together, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honey-comb. And he took it, and did eat before them, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.

And after eight days, Jesus again stood in the midst of the disciples, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two

other of his disciples. So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these : He saith unto him, Yea, Lord ; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me ? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord ; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me ? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me ? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst : but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he signifying by what death he should glorify God. And, when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following ; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee ? Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do ? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? Follow thou me.

Jesus showed himself alive after his sufferings by many infallible proofs, being seen of his disciples forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God ; and, at the end of forty days, being assembled together with them at a mountain of Galilee, he said, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. And they wor-

shipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

BRIEF REVIEW.

Who are mentioned as going first to see the sepulchre?—Who did they see there?—Who next visited the sepulchre?—To whom is it mentioned that Christ at different times appeared?—How long did he remain on earth after his resurrection?—From what place did he ascend into heaven?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There are then no less than eight distinct appearances of our Lord to his disciples after his resurrection, recorded by the sacred historians; in regard to these, it is quite impossible that there should have been any delusion or imposition, and that all those different persons could be deceived in these appearances of One whose countenance, figure, voice, and manner, they had for so long a time been perfectly well acquainted with, and who now, not merely presented himself to their view transiently and silently, but ate and drank and conversed with them, and suffered them to touch him and examine him thoroughly, that they might be convinced by all their senses, that it was truly their beloved Master, and not a spirit that conversed with them. It is quite impossible that the disciples should have invented a tale to impose upon others, because it would have been an imposition, not only on others, but on themselves; it would have been an attempt to persuade themselves that their Master was risen when really he was not; from whence no possible benefit could arise to them, but on the contrary, grief, disappointment, and mortification in the extreme.

CHAP. CCXXVII.

The Descent of the Holy Ghost, or the Day of Pentecost. From the second Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

WHEN the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and

marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak, Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. And let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What took place upon the day of Pentecost?—Which one of the apostles addressed the multitude?—What inquiry did they make when

Peter had finished speaking?—What reply did he give them?—How many were baptized at this time?—What did they do with their possessions?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is the Holy Spirit of God which is the sole author and spring of all true delight, of all real content within us; of that unspeakable joy in believing, that confidence of hope, that satisfaction in well-doing. And since such are the unspeakable benefits accruing to us from this most excellent gift of God by him graciously conferred on all good Christians, we should correspondently endeavor to make grateful and worthy returns for this gift by using it to those good purposes for which it is bestowed. Let us then earnestly invite this Holy Guest unto us by our prayers and willingly receive him in our hearts. Let us not exclude him by supine neglect and rude resistance; let us not grieve him by our perverse and froward behaviour; let us not tempt him by our fond presumptions or base treacheries; let us not quench his heavenly light and heat by our foul lusts and passions; but let us ever hearken gladly to his faithful suggestions and comply with his kindly motions.

CHAP. CCXXVIII.

Martyrdom of Stephen, and the Miraculous Conversion of Saul. From the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth Chapters of Acts.

STEPHEN, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And when they had heard the answer of Stephen, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory

of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and halting men and women, committed them to prison; and breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

As Saul journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? The Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. He trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? The Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here

he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all they that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on his name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is first said of Stephen in this chapter?—Who disputed with him?—Of what did they accuse him?—What was his end?—Who is said to have consented to his death?—What is said of Saul?—Where and on what occasion did the Lord appear to him?—What is related of Ananias in relation to Saul's conversion?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the history of St. Paul's conversion, we should observe the exceeding great goodness of our blessed Lord, both towards St. Paul and towards the Church. How kind and gracious were the words that he spoke, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" intimating the love and tenderness he had for all his true followers, insomuch that he looked upon any injuries committed against them, as so many injuries committed against himself. He next gave a seasonable and very affecting caution. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." I am Jesus the Saviour of the world: It is hard for thee to contend with one so much mightier than thou art: stop thy career, and retreat in time. These were moving arguments, and pierced to the very soul. But, to make the impression still stronger, he was pleased to surround him with a dazzling light, and to strike him blind for a season. He had thus a better opportunity of retiring inwards, for the purpose of recollecting and considering. These outward means, together with inward grace, had their full effect, and made Saul become a very obedient and humble convert to the faith of Christ. We should

adore that miraculous grace which called him to be an Apostle, and bless God for the advantages we have derived from his indefatigable labors. And though we have been great sinners, we should encourage ourselves from his example, with hopes of acceptance, provided we sincerely repent : remembering the best way to show the sincerity of our conversion is, by actions opposite to our former sins, that those virtues may be most conspicuous in our turning to God, which have been most neglected in our state of folly.

CHAP. CCXXIX.

The Conversion of Lydia and the Jailer. From the sixteenth Chapter of Acts.

ON the sabbath we went out of the city, (Philippi) by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made ; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us : whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

And it came to pass as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying : the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them : and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely : who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a

great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas ; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? They said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

When he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go ; now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison ; and now do they thrust us out privily ? nay, verily ; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates : and they feared when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia : and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

BRIEF REVIEW.

What is related of Lydia ?—For what were Paul and Silas imprisoned ?—How were they delivered from prison ?—What took place with the Jailer after the earthquake ?—What caused the magistrates to be afraid ?—Where did Paul and Silas go on leaving the prison ?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The question which the trembling and astonished jailer put to Paul and Silas, when he saw the prison doors opened in a miraculous manner, is a question of the utmost moment and importance, in which it nearly concerns us all to be well resolved. For, if there be a life beyond the present, and we do not die like beasts that perish ; if death do not put a final period to our existence, but when this short life is ended, we enter upon the regions of eternity, and shall be for ever happy or miserable,

according as we demean ourselves in this short time of trial and probation; if this be the condition of mankind, (as the voice of reason, the dictates of conscience, and the Holy Scriptures, do loudly proclaim it is,) how does it behoove every one of us to inquire what we must do to attain everlasting life, and to consider whether we are in the way that leads to heaven and immortality: or, if we have been so unhappy as to wander out of it, how we may recover and return to it again.

CHAP. CCXXX.

Paul's Defence before King Agrippa. From the twenty-sixth Chapter of Acts.

I THINK myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify) that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief Priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon, as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief Priests, at mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee

for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision : but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for



PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.

repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come : that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself : much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus : but speak forth the words of truth and

soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom I also speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him: for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We see how great was the evidence and force of what the Apostle delivered when the king owns himself almost persuaded to become a Christian. And why not altogether? Was it for want of sufficient proofs? Certainly not. The arguments which the Apostle used, were so convincing, that had he only thoroughly and seriously given his attention to them, he would have been not only almost, but altogether persuaded. It was not therefore for want of evidence that he was only almost convinced, but for want of due consideration and attention. He would not give himself leisure thoroughly to weigh these things, agreeably to their importance. He was in haste, and had other things to mind. This history affords to all Christians a very instructive and important lesson. In how lively a manner does this king represent the case of multitudes in our day, who are often almost persuaded to become Christians; that is, true, sincere, and faithful disciples of Christ, yet through the power of their lusts, and their love of the world, are never thoroughly persuaded, and come to a full resolution! In one sense, indeed, they are Christians: that is, they profess the Christian name, to which they have been bred, and they perhaps see the evidence of the truth of the Gospel, so that they cannot but believe it. To them the same appeal may be made, which St. Paul made to Agrippa; but still they are not persuaded to become the subjects of Christ indeed, and to be governed by his holy laws.

CHAP. CCXXXI.

An Exhortation to Union among Christians, as Members of one Body. From the twelfth Chapter of Romans.

I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,

which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office ; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith ; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering : or he that teacheth, on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation : he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil ; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another ; not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord ; rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer ; distributing to the necessity of saints ; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you : bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath : for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The difference between humility and pride consists in this, that the humble man, of whatever talents he is possessed, considers them as so many trusts reposed in him by God, which are so far from raising his pride, that they excite his caution ; as knowing that to "whom much is given, of him much will be required." Whereas the proud values himself, as if he were not only the subject, but the author of those good qualities, and so makes an idol of himself instead of adoring and thank-

ing God for them. The proud man is dazzled with the lustre of his own excellences; whereas the humble man, though not insensible of particular endowments, yet thinks meanly of himself absolutely and upon the whole, and begs that God would "not weigh his merits, but pardon his offences."

CHAP. CCXXXII.

Christians exhorted not to censure or condemn one another for Matters of Indifference.
From the fourteenth and fifteenth Chapters of Romans.

HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is

not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Even such actions as appear to us allowable, yet if they appear evil to others, it is, ordinarily speaking, both our prudence and our duty, to abstain from, as much as with tolerable convenience we can. Whatever indeed on mature consideration we are fully persuaded we ought to do, that we must do, let the world think as it will. But where we apprehend a thing to be only permitted, if the wise will disapprove of it, or the injudicious misinterpret it; if the good will be afflicted, or the bad rejoice at it; if rigid and warm tempers will be guilty of censuring us for it rashly, or easy and complying ones follow us in it against their judgment; if our taking harmless liberties will encourage others to take sinful ones; in short, if any how, by doing what otherwise we might, we shall induce any one else to do what he ought not: the great law of Christian charity requires, that "no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way;" or do any thing whereby he is grieved, "or offended, or made weak."

CHAP. CCXXXIII.

Character of Christian Charity. From the thirteenth Chapter of the first of Corinthians.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Charity is that principle of love and friendship which preserves the unity of the Christian society, and binds Christians to Christ and to one another as members of his mystical body—it unites upon earth those who are to be united in heaven; and therefore it must be the constant endeavour of every true Christian to promote it by every method in his power; by his words and works; his conversation and example.

The apostle says, that those who are possessed with the virtue of charity, are neither envious, nor haughty, nor suspicious, nor self-interested, nor peevish, nor quarrelsome; but that they are patient, meek, peaceable; that they judge charitably of their neighbour; that they do good; that they bear all things. This disposition of charity, and its several effects, plainly proves that charity is the sum of all other virtues, and the true way to discharge all the duties of Christianity.

CHAP. CCXXXIV.

The Doctrine of the Resurrection. From the fifteenth Chapter of the first of Corinthians.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Let the consideration of that unspeakable reward, which God hath promised to good men at the resurrection, encourage us to obedience and a holy life. We serve a great Prince, who is able to promote us to honour, a most gracious Master, who will not let the least service we do for him pass unrewarded. This is the inference which the apostle makes from his large discourse of the doctrine of the resurrection in this chapter. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Nothing will make death more welcome to us than a constant course of service and obedience to God. "Sleep," says Solomon, "is sweet to the labouring man." So after a great diligence and industry in working out our salvation, and, as it is said of David, "serving our generation according to the will of God," how pleasant will it be to fall asleep! And, as a useful and well-spent life will make our death to be sweet, so will it make our resurrection to be glorious. Whatever acts of piety we do to God, or of charity to men; whatever we lay out upon the poor and afflicted and necessitous, will all be considered by God for Christ's sake in the day of recompense, and most plentifully rewarded to us.

CHAP. CCXXXV.

Relative Duties. From the sixth Chapter of Ephesians, the third Chapter of Colossians, and the second and third Chapters of the first Epistle of Peter.

CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment

with promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers ; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that your Master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake : whether it be to the king, as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another ; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous ; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing : but contrariwise, blessing ; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

CHAP. CCXXXVI.

Christian Precepts and Exhortations. From the fifth and sixth Chapters of Galatians, the second and fourth Chapters of Ephesians, and the fourth Chapter of Philippians.

THE fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Let us not be weary in well-doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

By grace are ye saved, through faith : and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do : and the God of peace shall be with you. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. CCXXXVII.

Christian Precepts and Exhortations. From the sixth Chapter of the First Epistle of Timothy, and the first and second Chapter of James.

GODLINESS with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into

many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain

man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God; and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

The morals and duties inculcated in the last three chapters, and indeed through the Sacred Scriptures, show the value of the Inspired Volume, and urge upon the mind of rational beings the importance of listening to its counsels, and obeying its divine commands. We cannot close our *Observations* more appropriately than by quoting the following opinion of the late learned Sir William Jones, in the last leaf of whose Bible were written these words: "*I have regularly and attentively read these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more simplicity and beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been composed.*"

THE DISCOURSES OF JESUS,

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, AND THE NAMES OF THE PLACES WHERE
THEY WERE DELIVERED.

	PLACES.
Conversation with Nicodemus,	Jerusalem.
Conversation with the Woman of Samaria,	Sychar.
Discourse in the Synagogue of Nazareth,	Nazareth.
Sermon upon the Mount,	Nazareth.
Instructions to the Apostles,	Galilee.
Denunciations against Chorazin, &c.,	Galilee.
Discourse on occasion of healing the infirm Man at Bethesda,	Jerusalem.
Discourse concerning the Disciples plucking Ears of Corn on the Sabbath,	Judea.
Refutation of his working Miracles by the agency of Beel- zebub,	Capernaum.
Discourse on the Bread of Life,	Capernaum.
Discourse about internal Purity,	Capernaum.
Discourse against giving or taking offence, and concerning forgiveness of Injuries,	Capernaum.
Discourse at the Feast of Tabernacles,	Jerusalem.
Discourse on occasion of the Woman taken in Adultery,	Jerusalem.
Discourse concerning the Sheep,	Jerusalem.
Denunciations against the Scribes and Pharisees,	Peræa.
Discourse concerning Humility and Prudence,	Galilee.
Directions how to attain Heaven,	Peræa.
Discourse concerning his Sufferings,	Jerusalem.
Denunciations against the Pharisees,	Jerusalem.
Prediction of the Destruction of Jerusalem,	Jerusalem.
The consolatory Discourse,	Jerusalem.
Discourse as he went to Gethsemane,	Jerusalem.
Discourse to the Disciples before his Ascension,	Jerusalem.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS,

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, AND THE NAMES OF THE PLACES WHERE
THEY WERE DELIVERED.

	PLACES.
Parable of the Sower,	Capernaum.
“ Tares,	Capernaum.
“ Seeds springing up imperceptibly,	Capernaum.
“ Grain of Mustard Seed,	Capernaum.

Parable of the Leaven,	Capernaum.
“ Found Treasure,	Capernaum.
“ Precious Pearl,	Capernaum.
“ Net,	Capernaum.
“ Two Debtors,	Capernaum.
“ Samaritans,	near Jericho.
“ Rich Glutton,	Galilee.
“ Servants who waited for their Lord,	Galilee.
“ Barren Fig-tree,	Galilee.
“ Lost Sheep,	Galilee.
“ Lost Piece of Money,	Galilee.
“ Prodigal Son,	Galilee.
“ Dishonest Steward,	Galilee.
“ Rich Man and Lazarus,	Galilee.
“ Unjust Judge,	Peræa.
“ Pharisee and Publican,	Peræa.
“ Labourers in the Vineyard,	Peræa.
“ Pounds,	Jericho.
“ Two Sons,	Jerusalem.
“ Vineyard,	Jerusalem.
“ Marriage Feast,	Jerusalem.
“ Ten Virgins,	Jerusalem.
“ Talents,	Jerusalem.
“ Sheep and the Goats,	Jerusalem.

THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST,

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, AND THE NAMES OF THE PLACES WHERE THEY WERE WROUGHT.

PLACES.

Jesus turns Water into Wine,	Cana.
“ Cures the Nobleman's Son of Capernaum,	Cana.
“ Causes a miraculous Draught of Fishes,	Sea of Galilee.
“ Cures a Demoniac,	Capernaum.
“ Heals Peter's Wife's Mother of a Fever,	Capernaum.
“ Heals a Leper,	Capernaum.
“ Heals the Centurion's Servant,	Capernaum.
“ Calms the Tempest,	Sea of Galilee.
“ Cures the Demoniacs of Gadara,	Gadara.
“ Cures a Man of the Palsy,	Capernaum.
“ Restores to Life the Daughter of Jairus,	Capernaum.
“ Cures a Woman diseased with a Flux of Blood,	Capernaum.
“ Restores to Sight Two Blind Men,	Capernaum.
“ Heals one possessed with a Dumb Spirit,	Capernaum.
“ Cures an Infirm Man at Bethesda,	Jerusalem.
“ Cures a Man with a Withered Hand,	Judea.
“ Cures a Demoniac,	Capernaum.
“ Feeds miraculously Five Thousand,	Decapolis.

Jesus	Heals the Woman of Canaan's Daughter,	. . .	near Tyre.
"	Heals a Man who was Dumb and Deaf,	. . .	Decapolis.
"	Feeds miraculously Four Thousand,	. . .	Decapolis.
"	Gives Sight to a Blind Man,	. . .	Bethsaida.
"	Cures an Epileptic Boy,	. . .	Tabor.
"	Restores to Sight a Man born Blind,	. . .	Jerusalem.
"	Heals a Woman under an infirmity Eighteen Years,		Galilee.
"	Cures a Dropsy,	. . .	Galilee.
"	Cleanses Ten Lepers,	. . .	Samaria.
"	Raises Lazarus from the Dead,	. . .	Bethany.
"	Restores to Sight Two Blind Men,	. . .	Jericho.
"	Blasts the Fig-tree,	. . .	Olivet.
"	Heals the Ear of Malchus,	. . .	Gethsemane.
"	Causes the miraculous Draught of Fishes,	. . .	Sea of Galilee.

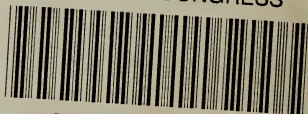


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